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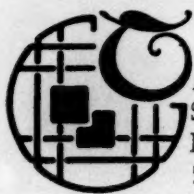
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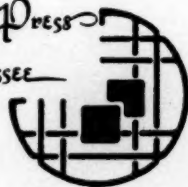
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Sewanee Review

EDITED BY

WILLIAM S. KNICKERBOCKER

ASIDES AND SOLILOQUIES

THE almost purely social aspects of Liberalism, manifested chiefly in humanitarian impulses and achievements, are not discounted nor repudiated when we dimly realize, under the assaults of Fascist and Communist or obscurantist critics, the present necessity of rehabilitating the philosophical or idealist foundations of Liberalism. For Liberalism, while always remaining essentially an attitude, pliable and rationally adjustable to shifting frames or emphases, has its intellectual justification and may, on occasion, be expressed in schematic form. The Liberal creed or position, so systematically stated, would obviously be provisional and tentative because the Liberal himself must be free even from his experimental and pragmatic expressions of his belief—even of his belief in liberty. His readiness to alter his creed is not an evidence of his timidity, or of his courage, for that matter; it is an outward and visible sign of his devotion to Truth. He is even, on occasion, ready to be among those who, in a liberal spirit, are ready to renounce even creedal Liberalism itself for the sake of the higher fruit of liberalism. He may say, as Matthew Arnold said, "I am a liberal but a liberal tempered by experience, reflection, and renouncement."

Given, then, the liberal attitude, which is more the weather of a mind than an anatomy of creedal or doctrinal declarations, certain principles of liberalism are capable of expression. Among living Americans, perhaps no one has more consistently and per-

sistently applied the fundamentally liberal attitude of classic Americanism than has Nicholas Murray Butler in his series of books published during the last quarter of a century. President Butler has succeeded to an extraordinary degree in keeping clear of the distracting and frequently contradicting tensions of non-essentials in the minor incrementa of the American legacy of Liberalism and of political literature. With bold strokes, he has indicated the underlying agreements of our political theorists like Hamilton and Jefferson which less acute minds have failed to discern. One of our younger, contemporary Harvard liberals, Mr. Brooks Otis, has recently in the pages of his newly-founded magazine *The New Frontier* (Cambridge, Massachusetts) made the effort to apply liberal principles in a bold examination of the proposals and projects of economic radicals of the more utopian type.

ECONOMIC radicalism, as distinguished from liberalism, has its strength chiefly when its advocates are in a minority and lack either the appliances or power to inject into existing social structures their grandiose conjectures. In a time of conceptual uncertainty or hysteria—when everyone becomes a Mr. Jarndyce and acutely feels the winds of doctrine blowing from everywhither and, unlike him, establishes (not a private but a public) “Growlery”—the lunatic fringe of sentimentalists is prone to swarm to doctrinaires like Marx, Pareto, Major Douglas, Hitler, Mussolini, or Stalin (it doesn’t matter to whom, so long as the Authoritarian shouts the doctrines confidently enough!) The Utopians among the doctors of economics are then likely to lose the only valuable function they possess: that of being gadflies. Given a state of mawkish sentimentalism such as now exists—evidences of which can be so often seen in the pages of such valued and valuable periodicals as *The New Republic*, *The Nation*, *The Forum*, *Harper’s*, and even the amiable and mild *Scribner’s*—a little, old-fashioned scepticism—perhaps satire, irony, or even sarcasm—would be salutary. Optimism seems to have run amuck in the nostrums and panaceas offered us by the new doctrinaires who threaten to put to blush those theological dogmatists who formerly terrified us with their threats of “odium theologicum.”

THE intolerance and cocksureness of economic radicalism points disastrously in many Liberals towards the modified, less radical form of "planned economy". Rosy prospects are offered which range all the way from elimination of waste to the Happy Isles of greater, and less frequently interrupted, economic security. No sensible person, surely, could resist so luring a promise. But, as Mr. Herbert Ravenel Sass of Charleston points out in his essay, "The New America and the Old South" (printed in this issue), the choice is forced upon us to decide between our preference for economic security or for political liberty. (The question might well be raised: is there really a demonstrable tension and irresolvable conflict between them? But what political or economic philosopher has clearly proved that there is not?) "The rush and roar of practical life," said Arnold, "will always have a dizzying and attracting effect upon the most collected spectator, and tend to draw him into its vortex." Arnold's criticism of the practical man—his criticism of the person who will be forever precipitating occasions in order to put his half-thought notions to the test of experiment—was perhaps never so true as today. The realization of how the Word is made Flesh—the emergence of Idea into Structure—, through contingent series forced by accommodations to existing structures, is lamentably far from the comprehension of the "practical" man. "To act is so easy," as Arnold says; "to think so hard! It is true that [one] has many temptations to go with the stream, to make one of a party movement, one of these *terre filii*; it seems ungracious to refuse to be a *terre filius*, when so many excellent people are; but [one's] duty is to refuse, or, if resistance is vain, at least to cry with Obermann: *Périssons en résistant*."

YET there are some who have not bowed the knee to Baal. In one of those quiet little *International Conciliation* pamphlets (October, 1934, No. 303), which the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace steadily issues without the benefit of Goebblean bugles, the text of an address delivered May 10, 1934 at London by Dr. Gustav Cassel, Professor Emeritus of Political Economy of the University of Stockholm, is given. The title is "From Protectionism Through Planned Economy to Dictatorship".

The address re-affirms Liberalism which, though abandoned by many in the general stampede to Procrustean Plannationism, has not yet been conclusively demonstrated to be sterile and futile. Space here forbids more than the reprinting of some of Dr. Cassel's thought-provoking remarks. "Protection", he says, "always tends to stimulate production at home and thus to foster competition in the most unsound forms." "People begin, as it seems, more and more to acquiesce in some sort of fatalism with regard to the progressive destruction of the world's economy, looking upon it as a destiny impossible to resist." "A division of labor between nations is under all circumstances of essential importance and must remain a guiding principle for any reasonable economic policy . . . Only a coöperation between all the specialized nations can be expected to lead to an all-round and efficient satisfaction of human wants and to a progressive rise of our standard of life." "Liberalism did away with the whole idea that the attainment of such a balance [balance of the country's foreign trade] required governmental control in any form, and through decades of the most flourishing economic progress the truth of this Liberal principle has been practically proved."

Nationalistic economic planning is hailed by many as an effort to introduce scientific principles of control into the modern social order. Who has better pointed out the underlying obscurantism, if not sentimentalism, of this Procrustean Plannationism, than has Dr. Cassel? "Soviet Russia," he said, "began with a so-called Five-Year Plan involving an increase of capital at a rate far above anything ever conceived by a so-called capitalistic society. Such an economy is of course possible only when consumers are starved; and in Russia, as we know, they were starved to an incredible degree in order that the planned economy should get means for the most gigantic constructions and an unparalleled development of the country's resources along capitalistic lines. Now the Russian authorities seem to have found that they have gone too far in this direction, and at present they are elaborating a new plan which is said to break radically with the former plan, the purpose being to give more attention to the consumers' needs. *Such radical alterations in the guiding principles of the authoritative economy correspond to the common crises of the old capitalistic society, but*

surpass them immensely in severity." (Italics mine.) But the most telling stroke of Professor Cassel is this: "... a planned economy without any definite plan for its annual increase of capital is in reality no planned economy at all. It is a pure illusion that the experiments hitherto made in planned economy have brought society a single step nearer to rationalization than it normally was in pre-war days. In essential points the results are absolutely in the opposite direction."

NOW, is there anybody left who doesn't know what we mean—we Liberals—when we remain indifferent to the dithyrambs of the Authoritarians, or when we lift our eyelashes and sweetly but enigmatically murmur, "Just mere Procrustean Plan-nationism!"

by Anise Colburn

NATIVITY

There was a difference,—that shuttered night
Was not as other nights! There was a star
I never saw before, whose silver light
Stood at the pane, and laid a luminous bar
Across us as we slept. The leaves outside
Talked sleepy music. Then it was, I know,
That I recalled another star that stood
Over a stable roof-top long ago.

And might He not have other sons,—a-many?
And might mine not be one? This fragile head
So warm against my arm? There was the morning
Up in the orchard, too, and all they said,—
Strange words,—the cloud, the sunlight, and the blue
Light on the hills!—Mary heard voices, too.

by Lodwick Hartley

A. D. 1935

(A SUITE CHIEFLY FOR BRASSES)

I.

MICROCOSM

People in houses on a barren street,
Washing and drying,
Living and dying,
Paring their nails by a trash-burner's heat.

This is a world untouched by madness—
Sane, cold world by a windlass well;
A corridor reeking with cabbage smell.
This is a world untouched by madness.

They can use a pillow for a broken pane.
The clothes line sags in the dismal dawn;
There are broken shutters that never are drawn,
And tattered umbrellas to mock the rain.

And days may be choked by a yellow fog,
And nights may never coax out a star,
And winter may fling its snows afar—
Spring cannot bring a leaf to a log.

And eyes may let out their gleam to hire,
And cheeks may sink and lips may fade,
And tongues become sore with the words they've made.
(Love is a crone by a drift-wood fire.)

People in houses on a barren street,
Living and dying,
Washing and drying . . .

II.

BROWN STONE FRONT

There was on her face a twisted smile—
She had called the snow *white suffering*.
The pane was blue; the candles flickered for a while;
And life lay still without, a prostrate thing.
She knew that laughter came from leaden throats,
When laughter came.
The harpsichord could give its twanging notes,
And tallow drippings yet escaped the flame
To trickle down the polished brass
(A tear could never make so marked a trail).
And winter, the eternal flagellant, must pass,
Denied the solace of a muted wail.

III.

SKYSCRAPERS

For these the world has waited all its span of years,
Fair alabaster towers ribbed with steel
And fairy spires that thrust their heads above the clouds
To catch the ancient splendor of the spheres.

Who cares if grayish shadows whirl about their feet,
Miasma from the rot of human bones?
Above the clouds one seldom hears the overtones
Of earthling pains;
And stench is dissipated when it dares to rise
To taint the chastity of wind-swept skies.

by Herbert Ravenel Sass

UP FROM THE SOUTH

THE OLD SOUTH AND THE NEW AMERICA

THE suggestion contained in this article may be summarized as follows:

That, in the light of events occurring around us, The South of 1861 and earlier (the Old South, as we call it) has assumed a new and practical significance for us of today; because it now seems possible that, after a painful and necessary period of experimentation with various modern nostrums, all of them destructive of liberty, we may win back to a practicable degree of freedom and of happiness by returning, more or less unconsciously, to the realistic conceptions of society and of government which the Old South exemplified.

This is a speculation so subversive of a tradition sacred to most Americans these seventy years and more that it is likely to excite not only ridicule but possibly, in some quarters, indignation. There is no just cause for the latter feeling; for no other motive exists here than the writer's belief that the events now taking place in this country, and in various other countries, throw new light upon certain fundamental American issues and that a careful re-examination of the South that ended at Appomattox may help toward an intelligent confronting of great problems now before us. To that practical end he suggests a candid re-examination of the Old South in the light of these contemporary events and presents here the reasons for his suggestion.

Those who have the patience to consider the suggestion calmly will at once proceed to meet it with two familiar arguments, namely: that the economic base upon which the civilization of the Old South rested was unsound; and, second, that the political philosophy and practice of the Old South was a denial of the American ideal of democracy in that it conserved an exclusive ruling class and denied opportunity to the "common man". Up to the

were still apparently valid, there would be no profit in proceeding with this inquiry. The important fact is that now, for the first time in seventy years, it becomes practically possible to challenge their validity.

The broad truth seems to be that we Americans have assumed the civilization of the Old South to have been faulty for no better reason than the fact that it differed radically from the civilization which overwhelmed and supplanted it and under which we have been living ever since. The Old South's economics were faulty because they differed from the Northern, or modern American, economics; the Old South's political philosophy was faulty because it differed from the Northern, or modern American, political philosophy. There could be no practically effective answer to that so long as the modern American economy and the modern American political philosophy appeared to be an enormous success. But now, when we contemplate the pass to which that economy has brought us, and when we perceive that our modern political philosophy has been so pitifully impotent to cope with reality that we have had to abandon the practice of democracy altogether, it is time to look back along the road that we have followed and ask ourselves in all candour what really happened in 1861-65 when this nation, as we now know it, had its beginning.

For it was then, of course, that we stood at the cross-roads and it was then that we rejected one road and elected to follow another. The Southern civilization came into conflict with the Northern civilization and was not only defeated but was destroyed and its fundamental concepts were expunged from the American scheme of things. Those concepts were erased completely and the Northern concepts took their place and from that time forward have directed our course. As it faded into the distance behind us, the Southern civilization became only a memory, and a memory so obscured with mists of fancy and error that presently it took on a fantastic unreal quality like a fairy-tale for children, unworthy of the attention of practical men.

Sometimes it was an ugly fairy-tale of sin and tyranny and oppression and wilful violation of human rights. But generally (for it was admitted by all that the South died gallantly) it was a pretty fairy-tale of lords and ladies who lived charmingly in a

lovely Fools' Paradise which unfortunately stood in the way of human progress and so was inevitably destroyed. So grew the legend of the glamorous Old South, unpractical, archaic, unable to face reality—a picturesque, artificial, charmingly but childishly romantic Poictesme.

Let us examine that Poictesme, that supposedly romantic Old South, in the light of what is now happening. The inquiry should be conducted in two broad fields—the political and the economic.

I.

Politically, the Old South represented the most determined effort ever made in America to save democracy from itself, to make it practical and workable.

The Old South's democracy—a various and developing thing, for the Old South was a varied and developing country, parts of it old and ripened, parts of it new and raw—was, nevertheless, crystallized ultimately in the political philosophy of John C. Calhoun. Calhoun looked at American democracy with the eyes of a realist and found it sick. He sought the root of the trouble and found it in the very premise upon which American democracy was ostensibly based—the theorem that “all men are created equal.” That, he declared boldly, was sheer nonsense. Inequality was a law of nature, and the only practicable democracy was one which, like that of the Greeks, would accept that law frankly and with a courageous recognition of all its implications.

With the same realistic and unsentimental gaze, Calhoun examined the actual working of American democracy and found it moving steadily toward an unrestrained despotism of the majority more ruthless and often less intelligent than that of an Oriental tyrant. Recognizing this as a fatal defect that must destroy democracy in the end, he set about correcting it. Thus he produced his revolutionary conception of the “concurrent majority”, providing for proportional economic representation in government and designed to prevent the oppression or destruction, by the massed “numerical majority”, of the varied and diverse interests, sectional and economic, of which a nation is composed.

There is not space—nor, in the present writer, ability—to discuss in detail the deep and vital significance of Calhoun. Sup-

posedly a dead statesman, rejected, discredited, he becomes in the light of current events dynamically alive, a prophet who foresaw much of what has happened to us and who labored to prevent it. Here it is possible only to sum up Calhounism as an attempt to reconcile the noble ideal of democracy with reality—to bring it, while there was yet time, into conformity with unescapable natural law and the facts of human life—to forestall the perilous conflict between liberty and security which is the great issue of our day and in which liberty may perish. The immediate point is that this realism came out of Poictesme—out of that romantic Old South which was so charmingly and childishly impractical, so far behind the times, so incapable of looking realities in the face.

Not only did it come out of the South; it was fundamentally the principle for which the South, at the last, fought its battle and laid down its life. That battle was utterly lost, Calhoun's philosophy was rejected; and American democracy, released from restraint, inspired by noble but impossible visions, drunk with the wine of an equalitarianism which must have made Jefferson (that believer in "aristoi") turn in his grave, went rejoicing on its way, laughing contemptuously at biological fact and snapping its fingers at the laws of nature. In some ways and for some people it was grand while it lasted. But it lasted, since Appomattox, only sixty-eight years.

Various and vigorous objections will be made at this point, and indeed this is a vast subject. One must not be confused by the ante-bellum clashes of inter-sectional interests which have obscured the deeper issues involved. Calhoun tried to solve not only the immediate problem of his time in order that the Union might be preserved, but the enduring problem of how to achieve security in a democracy in order that democracy might be preserved. Seeking to control the excesses of power which create large discontented groups and thus tend to destroy both security and loyalty, he invoked the principle of the referendum; he proposed, for the protection of aggrieved groups, a congress of appeal, in which the different interests of the country should be proportionately represented, to the end that Federal enactments before they became effective should have behind them a genuine and nearly complete concurrence of the country's will.

Under duress of circumstances scarcely realizable today, Calhoun employed his philosophy to defend an institution which in the face of world opinion was no longer defensible, and this has concealed for three quarters of a century the deep and permanent significance of the man. It is true, of course, that his proposal was never tried on a national scale; but if it is examined in the light of later national events and of the present national crisis, the examination is likely to produce interesting thoughts. We can not pursue these here; but we have seen with increasing clearness the effects of a system which leaves large blocks of population defenseless; and—even while the old State lines are seemingly in process of complete obliteration—we are hearing men say again that this country is too big and too diverse to live long under a regime of central consolidated power, that a measure of regional autonomy, coinciding roughly with economic interest, must be achieved.

Moreover, while Calhoun's conception was never tested nationally, it was in a practical sense tested locally in some of the older States of the South and especially in Calhoun's own State, South Carolina, where government was based on a blend of manhood suffrage and property-holding, on the theory that the different interests of society should be proportionately represented. This was an imperfect system, as all systems are, and it involved certain injustices. But its practical effect was to retain the responsibility of government among those who had given some evidence of fitness; and it is a notable and pertinent fact that so long as this system lasted, (and no longer), South Carolina was a great commonwealth, the political and intellectual leader of the "Deep South", exercising a national influence out of all proportion to her size, and producing upon her soil a culture and a civilization which in certain important ways has had "no American duplicate in scale and effect."

In the inevitable rejoinder that will be made here we shall come close to the heart of the matter. It will be said, it has been said a thousand times, that this Southern form of democracy was in practice no democracy at all, that it repressed ruthlessly the lower strata of society and produced a civilization conducted for the benefit of a chosen few—in short, that it outrageously violated the

cardinal American principle of equality of opportunity. This is the stock argument against the Southern political philosophy, the standard indictment of the Southern civilization. Until now it has never been possible to answer this argument effectively. But now the tremendous events of the immediate past and the explosive present have blown away its very premises.

Actually, as at least some Southerners have always known, it never had much to stand on. The proponents of the argument that the civilization of the Old South was undemocratic could ask for no better terrain on which to wage their fight than the State of South Carolina. There the political philosophy of Calhoun found both its inspiration and its most complete expression; there the distinctive civilization of the Southern South reached its utmost development in the great rice and cotton plantations which formed with Charleston almost a city-state; in ante-bellum South Carolina, more than anywhere else in America, the lower strata of society are popularly supposed to have been repressed for the benefit of an entrenched and exclusive aristocratic ruling class.

Yet a mere roll-call of the men who held place and power in ante-bellum South Carolina and were her most powerful leaders will show at once how large a proportion of them came up from those lower strata which are supposed to have been repressed so ruthlessly and so effectually. To name only those who come immediately to mind, Andrew Jackson, the first Wade Hampton, Langdon Cheves, George McDuffie, James L. Petigru, Gilmore Simms, James H. Hammond, B. F. Perry, Calhoun himself were self-made men or the sons of men who had earned their right to leadership in their communities.

Except Jackson, who left the State at an early age, and Calhoun, these men are little known today to the great mass of Americans. The reason is that all that most of them stood for and believed in was swept away by the outcome of the Civil War. But, except Jackson, these men—they include the son of an Indian trader, an apothecary's clerk, the son of an obscure school-teacher from Massachusetts, and a backwoods boy who had no schooling until he was practically a man—were among the rulers of South Carolina in that very period when she is supposed to have been most inimical to democracy; and their presence there, and the presence

of others like them, among the cherished and honored of the South's most "undemocratic" State, is enough to dispose forever of the myth that the civilization of the Old South was in any true sense undemocratic.

The democracy of Calhoun, of South Carolina, of the older South, did create (as every system has created) an upper class; and the semi-feudal nature of the social structure which the presence of the negro imposed upon the South gave it the appearance and many of the attributes of an aristocracy. *But it did not deny equality of opportunity.* The personnel of the Southern leadership in every sphere, bristling with men who had come up from below, demonstrates that fact. If it was an aristocracy it was the American kind, the kind that Jefferson believed in; its ranks were open, widely open, to character and ability; from Christopher Gadsden of the Revolution to Bedford Forrest of the Confederate War, the examples abound.

No system, certainly not our modern one, has ever achieved absolute equality of opportunity. It is contended here, in face of all that has been loosely thought and written to the contrary, that the "common man" of the South had greater opportunity under the old system which the Civil War destroyed than he has ever had under the new; and this contention is not affected by the subsequent progress in education, which, be it noted, would have occurred in any event. Even Senator Benjamin R. Tillman, perhaps its fiercest enemy, admitted that in South Carolina the old system "gave the state as good government, so far as purity and honesty are concerned, as any country ever had." *And good government is essential to opportunity,* for the common man as for every one else. Other men saw that before Calhoun; but no one else in America saw so clearly or urged so fearlessly in the interest of all classes the necessity of applying the acid of realism to the noble aspirations of democracy while there was yet time. And not until now has there been in America any chance that men would listen, because there is needed, in order to make them listen, the dire spectacle of democracy on the rocks and in imminent danger of destruction.

To those who are able to accept Senator Borah's recent assurance that democracy is really in no danger, all this will have little

meaning. To those who have abandoned democracy as permanently lost, it will be waste of time. For those who believe that no form of central dictatorship or of centrally decreed regimentation can endure in this vast and varied country, the thought here expressed is this:

That in the Old South there existed a democracy which was undoubtedly imperfect but which was based upon a political philosophy more realistic and therefore sounder than ours and which did, in the long view more successfully than ours, approximate equality of opportunity, which is all that it is possible to ask; so that it may well be an intelligent and worthwhile plan to re-examine that Old South, not in the hope of finding there a model for our future (for the world has moved since then) but in the hope of rediscovering unchanging truths and principles directly applicable to the tremendous problem now confronting us.

If it be objected that this would be to go backward, the answer is that in this superficial sense it may be necessary to go backward a certain distance. If it be objected that no such revision of American democracy is practicable, one answer is that what men are unwilling to effect may be effected for them by inexorable necessity; as, for instance, when American democracy, after securing political equality for the Southern Negro as a result of a bloody war, saw that equality taken from him because a plain necessity required it. And finally one may ask whether any revision of democratic theory and mechanism can be considered more inconceivable than the complete abandonment of that theory and mechanism which took place in the spring of 1933.

II.

There is little space left in which to develop the second half of my thesis; that in the field of economics also the civilization of the Old South was, in the long view, more realistic and therefore sounder than the civilization which has supplanted it and is, for that reason, worthy of our careful attention today.

Here, too, what has happened to us traces straight back to Apomattox. Undoubtedly if the war between the sections had never occurred, Southern economy would, nevertheless, have changed;

it would have shown in important ways the effects of the world-wide industrial revolution. But it would have remained predominantly agrarian, and with the agrarian South still a factor to be reckoned with, the way would not have been cleared so completely for what actually took place in the United States. No one has summed up more compactly the growth of the modern American industrial machine than Dr. William E. Dodd, the eminent historian who is now Ambassador to Germany.

In order to win the Civil War, Dr. Dodd points out, President Lincoln, through the banking act of 1863, gave substantial control of the national finances to the powerful financial group of the North and then, through the tariff act of 1864, gave practical control of the American market to the Northern industrialists. Once saved, the Federal Government approved or at least permitted the building of an industrial belt from Boston to Chicago. Bankers united in a national association and compelled all minor institutions to keep their reserves in a few industrial cities, and within a few years the termini of the great new transportation systems were focused in a few great Northern cities. With finance, industry and transportation all centered in the industrial belt of the North and East, the capital of the country accumulated in the same area and there was created an industrial (and a sectional) control of American life never contemplated by the founders of the American Republic. Thus the former equilibrium between the urban and rural life of the country was progressively destroyed; and after the World War had given the industrial United States "the last day of its career", the machine that had thus been built up finds itself faced with utter collapse because there is no more fuel to keep it going.

Those who do not believe that a centrally directed regimentation of American life in all its phases and activities can endure more than a few years are forced, in their search for an alternative, back to the soil. They are forced to a recognition of the fundamental importance of the soil, with all the far-reaching implications—of which tariff revision is only one—which that involves. This necessity, moreover, is immediate and its practical expression is a restoration of the equilibrium between urban and rural life. The overwhelming dominance of the great industrial cities must be

ended; there must be a decentralization of money, of power; there must be a practical acceptance of the fact that our civilization depends ultimately upon the ability of its masses to derive, not money, but sustenance from the land.

Obviously this proposes that we undo to a great extent what happened as a result of the Civil War. It proposes that we return to the fundamental concepts that underlay the economy of the Old South and head for that very goal, a balanced rural-urban system (based primarily on the soil, but, modified profoundly of course, by the achievements of the Industrial Era) toward which the Old South was moving steadily when the Civil War intervened.

This involves patently a complete revision of what these many years we have been taught to believe about the economy of the Old South—that it was hopelessly anachronistic and basically unsound. Thoughtful students will not fall into the common error of supposing that the South's economy was, in any true sense, dependent upon slavery; it would, if time had been allowed it, have outgrown slavery without being profoundly affected by the change in the Negro's status. Nor was it obviously incapable of adjusting itself to the changes taking place in the world. It was predominantly agrarian, and therefore self-supporting, but a healthy development of industry was proceeding.¹

In the Fifties, for instance, Southern railway mileage was trebled. Charleston, which had built the first real railroad in the United States and the first to attain a length of a hundred miles, was investing great sums in throwing new lines across the mountains which, but for the war, would have brought the commerce and products of the swiftly developing West into the South-east. Workers in wood and iron were scattered throughout the South, there were many tanneries and many potteries, considerable iron ore was smelted. Manufacturing was rapidly expanding; in 1840 there were twenty-five small mills in North Carolina alone and by 1860 the number had grown to thirty-nine.

In short, while the Old South was basically agricultural, it was moving, before 1861, toward a fairly even balance between agri-

¹Vide "Mr. Ransom and the Old South" by William S. Knickerbocker, *SEWANEE REVIEW*, Vol. XXXIX, pp. 222-239. April, 1931.

culture and industry, between rural and urban populations, toward just such a balance as we now perceive to be necessary today. As for the contention sometimes heard that no predominantly agricultural civilization can succeed, it may be pointed out that what I have called the city-state of Charleston, the region of rice and cotton plantations constituting the South Carolina Low-Country, was one of the most successful civilizations that this continent has seen. It was a civilization so successful in every sense, culturally as well as economically, that from about 1827 until it was destroyed by war it exerted a greater influence upon national affairs than any other unit of the Union. And to the facile claim that it was really already declining or about to decline one has only to reply that the last decade of its existence was the most successful and prosperous in its history².

Little has been said here about slavery, and little need be said; for that kind of slavery (there are other kinds) is a dead thing and we are concerned not with the past but with the future. But neither the democracy nor the economy of the Old South can be understood unless certain facts about slavery are perceived. They may be stated briefly.

First, that neither politically nor economically was the Southern civilization conditioned upon perpetuation of slavery.

Second, that slavery was not, except in the early days, primarily a labor system; it became primarily a device of the white people of the South to protect their civilization from a

²The belief that the Old South was lacking in scientific and inventive ability takes too much for granted. The following facts are suggestive: Engineering skill probably superior to anything of the kind at that time known in America was manifested in the making of the great Carolina rice plantations. On many of them, as well as on the larger cotton plantations, the most modern methods of agriculture were anticipated. Individually they rank as the most impressive American examples of self-contained, self-supporting farms; as a whole they constitute a remarkable demonstration of the modern theory of large-scale farming. The *David*, designed by a South Carolinian scientist, first demonstrated the revolutionary possibilities of torpedo warfare; the *Virginia* or *Merrimac*, not the *Monitor*, was the precursor of the modern battleship. M. F. Maury of Virginia was widely regarded in Europe as the greatest American scientist, Marion Sims of South Carolina as the leading surgeon of his time; Langdon Cheves of South Carolina was a Darwinian before *The Origin of Species*. In pure science, as in literature, the Old South's contribution was undoubtedly limited by her enforced pre-occupation with politics, but a civilization which produced the old houses of Charleston can not be dismissed safely as intellectually deficient.

visible racial danger—the only device which most of them believed could be effective.

Third, that they were outgrowing this belief and would have abandoned this device (which was becoming economically unprofitable) but for the disastrous interference of well-meaning reformers at a distance.

Fourth, that the Northern Abolitionist movement (which, in its militant form, began thirty years before the Civil War and was a principal factor in blocking the emancipation movement in the South and in driving the South to an aggressive defense of slavery) should stand for all time as the supreme American example of the folly of fanaticisms, of interference in the affairs of other people.

Fifth, that Negro slavery, whatever its defects and however desirable its termination, was an incalculable boon to the Negro race, lifting millions of Negroes out of savagery more quickly perhaps than any other race has ever been lifted in the world's history.

*Sixth, that the Negro in the South served one end the importance of which is not yet clearly perceived, in that his presence there, a visible object lesson, compelled the Old South to fit its democracy to reality and caused it to create the realistic political philosophy for which it was damned and destroyed but to which, if we want no Caesar over us, we must presently return.**

III.

No honest Northerner need feel loath to consent to this and no honest Southerner can boast of it as a triumph for what is now the South. Only here and there in the South has there survived (a different thing from sentiment) a reasoned faith in the old principles. For the most part, Southerners—and who can blame them?—dazzled by the glittering paraphernalia of that magical myth, the “American standard of living”, were long ago persuaded that the Old South fully deserved its fate; and if Time, the

*These remarks about slavery are in a sense a digression—perhaps an unfortunate one because they may provoke controversy and because there is not space here to sustain the statements that have been made. Nor is there space to enlarge upon the clearer perception which thoughtful Southerners now have of the splendid idealism of the Northern people in the disastrous conflict of the Sixties. What has been said about slavery seems necessary for an understanding of the Old South, but acceptance of it is scarcely essential to the purpose of this paper, which is simply to suggest a reconsideration of the Old South in the light of what is now happening around us.

inexorable, is establishing today not only the truth but the cardinal importance of the fundamental things for which the Old South stood, the New South of this generation can claim no credit for the victory.

In short, if we Americans have erred, the New South has not merely condoned but has shared the error; and perhaps this may make less difficult the task of repairing the error as quickly as we must. It should at least make easier a re-examination of the Old South in the white light of events today—a re-examination unimpeded by sectionalism in the old bad sense—to the end that we may discover what there was in the Old South that was and is vital to the preservation of our common hope: “that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.”

For the time being it is dead and deservedly dead because it shut its eyes against reality. The sooner we were rid of the kind of democracy we had from 1865 to 1933 the better; and probably the most important achievement of the New Deal is this—it has called us back from a blind alley leading nowhere and has set us looking for the right road again. When we find it, probably after a long and painful groping through darkness, its goal may well be revealed as the kind of liberty which Calhoun defined, the kind of democracy, which the Old South at its best exemplified and in defense of which it perished.

by Merrill Moore

IT WOULD SURPRISE YOU

It would surprise you, Anencephalon,
To know where the old deities are gone;
Their source cannot outstrip their destinies;
From minds of men they go to libraries.

by *Laurence Lee Howe*

TENNESSEE WOODS: AUTUMN

TELL me, are you sleeping, Nathan Bedford Forrest?
For Autumn's hand has touched again the woods of Tennessee
There's frost in the air, and the blackbirds are flying,
And brown are the leaves on the sycamore tree.

Don't you remember the clear, cold weather,
With the sun red-streaking the morning sky?
And the sharp, strong odor of sweat and leather,
And the feel of a horse beneath your thigh?

Is it only the red leaves, Nathan Bedford Forrest,
That show so bright against the gray morning sky?
Or is it the corner of your blood-red battle flag,
Whipping in the breezes, as you hurry by?

Are they only gray tree trunks that show through the thickets,
Down in the hollow by the creek's muddy banks?
Or are they the butternut coats of your pickets,
Watching for the movements of the nearby Yanks?

Don't you remember the bugle sounding
Its brazen blare in the autumn dawn,
As you charged the foe, and the horse-hoofs pounding,
And the hard, dry rasping of sabres drawn?

Peace is on the dead leaves, Nathan Bedford Forrest—
Peace upon the valley—peace upon the hill;
And the trees are sleeping in the cold, pale sunlight—
Nathan Bedford Forrest, do they remember still?

Men forget so easily. Perhaps the trees remember
The singing of your horsemen as they went riding by—
"If you want to have a good time, jine the cavalry!"—
Singing in the morning beneath the dawn-streaked sky.

by William S. Knickerbocker

BROWN BACCHANTE

SUBDUE, but with an air of Cleopatra
And fastened devils in her heels;
Coming to the table from the kitchen
With silver dishes bearing meals;

Potatoes, steaming steak, and unctious onions,
"Yaas, ma'am!" to every cautious hint
Gently given by the lady mistress,
Though in her eyes a jungle glint,

The brown bacchante, "widowed" once or twice,
With something taunting in her face,
Meekly acquiesces to instructions
With sly, seductive, feline grace.

Delivered from the tyranny of dishes,
She vanishes for revels there.
Where? Somewhere down in Happy Hollow
To a dance and freer air.

by Joy Hearn

LEVEE

NIGHT came like a stealthy monster, prone
Upon the river . . . on the banks . . . The stars
Were years away, and cold. Gray, silent spars
Of rotting wood jut from the slush. The lone
Wail of a siren shudders through the gloom;
One steamboat labors on with sluggish might.
The god of primitives walks here tonight
With savage greed and lust . . . There is no room
For beauty. Sensuous—voluptuous—
The river coils, and with it coils the moon,
The stars, upon its mighty breast. How soon
The whole world seems to swirl out there, and truss
Its secrets up, and slither on, away—
Too covert to remain to greet the day.

by Mary Waller Shepherd

QUESTING

YOUR face stares at me from the gilded frame
I gaze upon your hair, your rose-flushed cheek;
Your mouth, though, is expressionless; the flame
Light of your eyes is dead. I turn and seek
You in the portrait with the turquoise comb
That rests against the soft waves of your hair.
I see a velvet dress and lace, like foam
From tumbling falls. But still you are not there.
I lift your miniature out of its case.
The brush has caught your daintiness and poise,
The tilt your head takes, and even a trace
Of your gay smile. Yet these are all mere toys.
But when (it's laughter gives my glance the clue)
The doorway frames your grace, I then find you.

by Percy MacKaye

THE MOCKING-BIRD, MISNAMED

THIS master-sprite has been too long maligned
By a false name imputing mockery.
Dullards that level all to their own kind
Mock but themselves to spread such calumny.

This Leonardo of the arts of tone,
Shy Thoreau learned in Shelley's ecstasy,
Mad Melville with the poise of Emerson,
Blithe Burns enamored of Gray's Elegy:

This bird of all the bards, whose myriad tongue
Lark, thrush and nightingale all emulate,
Himself in modest plumage goes unsung,
Content through variant pupils to create

Beauty from his exuberance of glory
In high reputes—that rob his repertory.

by Louise Crenshaw Ray

EVEN THE FEATHERED BREAST

ABOVE, unnumbered stars, Aldebaran
And Canopus, Rigal; while far below
In pulsing darkness, dreams the world of man.

The drone of cricket violins is slow
And rythmic as the beat of surf; while scent
Of bay-bloom and petunias is blent

By drowsy winds. Remotely from the night
Of darkened foliage, two owls appeal
And answer—eyes reflecting amber light,

A blur of downy bodies shod with steel . . .
Even the feathered breast burns to fulfill
Its longing; even the owl forgets to kill.

by Edd Winfield Parks

INSOMNIA

A weary monotone of half-formed thoughts
Ensaturates the empty jet of night
With taut images that have no meaning.
Quick nerves seek vain release from fevered skin.
The jealous brain would dominate the flesh
When time for thought is past; the skeleton
In part its final consummation seeks
But reason, fearful of that vasty plane
Wherein no reason lies, turns on itself,
Wards off this summer-seeming one night's death.

by Mary B. Ward

TO A POET IN THE MAGNOLIA GARDENS

COME, sing, with beauty-hunger keen
To loveliness that dwells between
These forest walls. Breathe vivid songs
Of burning beauty that belongs
To flaming words, inviolate,
Whose color-chords reverberate
Where bright magenta flames aspire
To be exquisite founts of fire;
Where argent, festooned mosses stir
The tangled, pale wisteria;
And sunbeams—tawny, ragged stars—
Burn in the firmamental bars
Of sombre shadows, and where birds,
Yellow as happy winged words,
Flutter and softly tear the veil
Of jade and violet, misty pale.

Come, and where coral roses climb,
Wreathe them in gay, exotic rhyme;
And transmute in keen, varied phrase
These burning, iridescent rays.
Catch centuried elms in masquerade
Of powdered hair and rose brocade.
Then let us glimpse the emerald light
Of mirrored water, where at night
An exquisite magnolia moon
Petals within the dark lagoon . . .

Sing, sing! for with you I am mute
At beauty's shrine; my feeble lute
Is silent when it would express
This garden's vivid loveliness.

by Louise Crenshaw Ray

SMOKE OVER ALABAMA

FROM villages of Creek and Cherokee—
Wigwams at Nanipacna, Talise—
Beside Ufala and her sister rivers,
Like incense offered Mother Sun, it quivers
In slender spirals. Hickory and oak
Are animate in acrid scent of smoke.

Spanish invasion, ruins smouldering
Where Alibamo warriors feel the sting
Of treachery—leave vestiges upon
The sky. Soon Indian sovereignty is gone . . .
The smoke of battle over Horseshoe Bend,
Fort Dale, Tombecbe, as the Creeks defend
Their disappearing empire. River-boats
Breathe smoky columns from their pulsing throats.

The smoke of gun-boats threatening Mobile,
Exploding shells, the smoke of Forrest's steel;
Destruction haunts a devastated land
Blackened and smoking from a conqueror's hand.
The smoke from furnaces at Cedar Bluff
Drifts over Gettysburg in valiant stuff
Of cannon; smoke from stacks at Briarfield
Crosses the sea to England with its yield.

At dusk in Birmingham and Bessemer,
Smoke is a symphony in gray—a blur
Of gray and violet, where funnels tower
Like steel-age organ-pipes replete with power.

by Madeleine B. Stern

HUNGRY GHOSTS

FLUX OF IDENTITY IN CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE

Yes, we have changed, slowly and silently changed;
We are the hungry ghosts of the selves we knew;

—CONRAD AIKEN, *White Nocturne*.

IN 1562 an interlude, *Jacke Jugeler*, was produced in England. The play was dramaturgically unimportant, being simply a Plautan imitation designed to offer "mirthe and recreation". Embedded in this fantastical presentation, however, was a theme which has since been employed, for better or worse, by almost every significant author of modern times. That theme may be called flux of identity. In the interlude the purpose of the Vice, Jacke Jugeler, is

To make Jenkine bylive yf I can
That he is not him selfe, but an other man.

By the trick of disguising himself as Jenkine, Jacke Jugeler actually convinces the former "that one man may have two bodies and two faces". The sixteenth century Jenkine was a deluded creature conceived as the subject of derision. But Jenkine was really not so dull.

Before the sixteenth century people had begun to think seriously about man's dualism.

My name is Mankynde. I have my composycyon
Of a body and of a soull, of condycyon contrarye:
Be-tweyx the tweyn is grett dyvisyon.

And that body-soul conflict was the kernel of Mankind's difficulty in identifying himself in the middle ages. In those benighted times the soul usually represented good and the body, evil¹. (Cf. *Debate Between the Body and the Soul*); the destiny of evil was always to bite the dust.

¹In the Malaysian region everyone has a good and a bad soul.

In modern times there has been a carry-over of this kind of dualism in which good and evil are two conflicting parts of man. The most famous medieval-moral dissociation of character is that of Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. In that book, a "transcendental medicine" cleaves "those provinces of good and ill which divide . . . a man's dual nature"; for man is actually two or more men; Hyde is no less real than Jekyll. The division between good and evil is not quite so symmetrical as in the medieval body-soul wrestle; Hyde is all evil, but Jekyll is simply Jekyll, devoid of malice, yet not angelic. The two differ in voice, appearance, tread; each is a balanced, mutually hating, "alter ego" of the other. To the objection that the story is fantastical and that the severance of the two characters must be induced by a chemical mixture, let be recalled that the cleavage becomes involuntary; that Jekyll, without a transcendental draught, often awakens as Hyde. Jekyll begins to dissolve under the dominating presence of his second self; evil spreads itself, octopus-like, until, in good morality fashion, it is ensnared in its own destruction, annihilating the now minor portion of Hyde, Jekyll. Stevenson's encroachment of evil upon good is borrowed in Henry James' *Turn of the Screw*. Peter Quint is Miles' evil angel, evil half; Miss Jessel is the similar constituent of Flora's nature. Under Jessel's influence, i.e., when the Jessel dominates within the child, Flora becomes hideous, hard, old. As in *Jekyll and Hyde*, evil is dispelled under the bright influence of the governess; however, evil has become so large a portion of the children's being that it is overcome only with Miles' death. The ratio of good to evil here recalls Stevenson. Ghosts are sometimes given, among their multitudinous duties, that of being the evil or good half of a character. This type of morality is represented by Stevenson's tale, *Markheim*. After Markheim slays the dealer he sees one whose outlines "seemed to change and waver . . . and at times he thought he bore a likeness to himself." Markheim sees a ghost who acts as his evil half, his cunning counselor, his abettor in crime. The ghost's baleful precepts, however, lead Markheim to surrender to the good within himself. When he decided to confess, the ghost changes, symbolising the fluctuation within Markheim; the phantom's features undergo "a wonderful and lovely change; they brightened

and softened with a tender triumph." A moral fantasy of dissociation of character was published five years ago, without benefit of ghosts, as Beerbohm's *Happy Hypocrite*. George Hell is pierced with the arrow of love for Jenny Mere, "and of a sudden his very soul had changed". His face does not become saintly with as rapid a transmutation as his soul. Therefore, to win the angelic Jenny, Mr. Hell must wear the mask of a saint, and change his name to George Heaven. But the face soon follows the direction of the soul; for when Mr. Heaven is unmasked, "his face was even as his mask had been . . . 'Twas a saint's face." Stevenson's *Markheim*, upholding the triumph of good over ill, seems to have exercised more of an influence on Beerbohm than *Jekyll and Hyde*, which, with its pessimistic philosophy, saw the last of its literary offspring in the *Turn of the Screw*. All this literature, following the medieval morality, has used the conception of division of identity to point a moral.

II.

The searchers after the "moi" among the romantics faced the problem without moral implications and with a twist in emphasis. For them, the struggle was between the personal self and external nature. It was to transcend that dualism that the transcendental philosophers busied themselves with many a fruitless rationalization. The later turn to realism might be characterized as an attempt to retreat to an impregnable ego. But the ego was shortly discovered to be not impregnable. And realism was discovered to be a blind alley. The most recent kind of dualism centered itself inside man. It was no longer a conflict of morals between evil and good or between man and the outer world. The match took place within man. The twentieth century Jenkine is profoundly harassed by the idea that he may fluctuate from one identity to another, or that he may be two or more characters at a time, or that he is unable to lay claim to any identity whatsoever. The "What am I?" vogue has been displaced by the "Am I?" What influence (for there is always a spark to the fire) was the basis for this twist given to the idea of flux of identity in the twentieth century? The theme has its place in the history of philosophy.

Perhaps the underlying force may be found in the philosophers who as they contemplated the ego saw its outlines become vague and indeterminate.

"Into the same river we both step and do not step. We both are and are not." Thus spake Heraclitus. That Ephesian noble of the fifth century B.C. conceived the world as an everliving fire which in its processes of combustion produced flux in the outer world and in the soul of man. Not only did the river change but we, too, fluctuating through the degrees of fire, water, and earth—and earth, water, and fire—were never the same for two successive instants. The influence of Heraclitus was not great, for those who studied him were not greatly affected by him; and for the next philosophical interpretation of his idea of flux, we must cross the centuries until we pause at David Hume. Although the latter defined personal identity as "nothing but a . . . collection of different perceptions, which . . . are in a perpetual flux and movement", still he believed that those varying dispositions are connected by the relation of causation and that so the ego endures. Hume was grazed, but not overwhelmed, by the difficulty. Similarly, Arthur Schopenhauer reacted. To him one individual is both the subject that knows and the thing-in-itself that is known. Thus "in the same ego two consciousnesses can arise of which the one knows nothing of the other." He perceived the difficulty of ascertaining the self, but avoided it by adding that the moral character of a man never alters. In the late nineteenth century Francis Herbert Bradley considered the subject. In attempting to discover the meaning of self, he discarded as irrelevant the body and psychical continuity. He could locate the self in no monad. He believed Schopenhauer's division of self into subject and object of thought not wholly fixed. And he concluded that "the self . . . is not a true form." Bradley's progress in the study of the ego consists in this definitely negative attitude; he can touch the self neither through Hume's causation nor Schopenhauer's moral continuity. Bergson² took up the problem where Schopenhauer left off. He saw two opposed identities, of which one derives from his conception of space, the other from his idea of time. The former is the social, the latter the inner self. Unlike Hume and Schopen-

²*Essai sur les Données Immédiates de la Conscience.*

hauer, Bergson did not evade the issue; there are "*deux moi différents*"; he merely advised us to cultivate the "temporal" self, the deeper ego. Of all these philosophers, Bergson alone may be said to have thrust the theme of alternate or co-conscious identities upon the attention of modern writers. The influence of Heraclitus and Bradley was not great; Hume and Schopenhauer turned from the issue. And even Bergson's influence upon our theme was subordinated not only to his own interest in the idea of flux of time, but was itself overshadowed by present-day psychology. Anthropology, disclosing the identification of certain tribes⁸ with their totems, their collective fluctuation into the totemic identity, may also be regarded as a secondary influence. But it is less to philosophy and anthropology that we must turn for the roots of the idea of flux of identity, than to psychology.

William James was one of the forces most influential in persuading creative writers that the self is a conglomerate of heterogeneous selves. He concluded that the constituents of the individual were:—

- (a) the material self including body, clothes, family, home;
- (b) the social self which is in turn cut up into "as many social selves as there are individuals who recognize" a man "and carry an idea of him in their mind";
- (c) the spiritual self, indicating man's subjective being, composed of various cephalic movements which may cause conflict among the parts of the spiritual self;
- (d) and finally the so-called pure ego which is the sense of our personal identity.

As will be inferred, this multiplicity of the ego is characteristic of non-psychiatric cases. The demarcation between the former and abnormal mutations of self is, as James points out, difficult to draw, but the literary followers of James have contented themselves principally with studies of the many selves, material, social, and spiritual, which constitute the "normal" man. Whether the writers who chose to designate identity in terms first employed by James were conscious of their debt to him is irrelevant. William James was in the air and exerted an influence even on those who had not studied him.

⁸*Viz.*: In Africa, Australia, Melanesia, India and North America. The tribe considers itself rather the relatives of the totem than the totem itself.

Strindberg was the first, in point of time, who followed James' teaching. The *Spook Sonata* owes its name to the fact that its characters are not what they seem to be, for each has a social and a personal self. The social identity of Jacob Hummel is that of a generous benefactor; his personal character is that of "a thief of human souls". The mummy, revealing Hummel's personal self, makes "a pass with her hand over his face as if removing a mask". The social personality is a mask, but a mask engrained in Hummel's reality. So with Countess Julie, her servant's mistress, who though socially a countess, is personally the lowliest of all. In the *Dream Play* "the characters split, double, multiply, vanish, solidify, blur, clarify" along Jamesian principles.⁴

The theme becomes more intricate in André Gide's *Counterfeiters*. Laura evolves into different social beings through loving different people. She becomes, in good feminine flux fashion, her lovers' conceptions of her. So Edouard comes to resemble Olivier, assuming Olivier's social self as Brown donned Anthony's mask. In such cases, there is a fluctuation of the ego from one person to another, a fact which proves more thoroughly, in case there have been any doubts, that people are capable of having many social and spiritual identities. The majority, however, without taking on the cast of another's personality, can counterfeit external selves to the world and internal characters to themselves. Edouard writes:

I am never anything but what I think myself—and this varies so incessantly, that often, if I were not there to make them acquainted, my morning's self would not recognize my evening's . . . It is only sometimes when I am alone that the substratum emerges and that I attain a fundamental continuity; but at such times I feel that my life is stopping, that I am on the verge of ceasing to exist.

⁴Strindberg's use of masks to indicate the essential equality of man's social and personal selves suggests Eugene O'Neill's use of that device in *The Great God Brown*. Dion Anthony's underself is ascetic, spiritual; his mask is sensual, Mephistophelian. He has two selves: the mask for the world; his inner identity for himself. When Brown wears Anthony's mask he himself becomes the masked Dion so acquiring another external self until he cries in despair, "Oh, how many persons in one God make up the good God Brown?" Instead of the trick of masks, O'Neill's latest play, *Days Without End*, employs two actors for the interpretation of two aspects of the same character. This is simply another device to externalize the social (which happens to be "good") and the personal (which happens to be "evil") selves of one man.

Here is James' pure ego, the feeling of identity based on psychological continuity. Also we observe spiritual selves created through self-deception, or, in Schopenhauer's terms, the individual is both the subject which thinks and the being that is thought of, the latter variable, the former identified only on the "verge of ceasing to exist."

Less intricate, more obvious is the study of intra-individual differences in Victoria Sackville-West's *All Passion Spent*. Lady Slane muses about her material self, comprising her corporeality, the "familiar trappings of voice, name, appearance, occupation, circumstance"; her social personality ("she could never be the same self with him [her husband] as when she was alone."); and her spiritual beings ("even the solitary self which she pursued shifted, changed, melted away as she approached it"). Lady Slane's *précis* of the constituents of her character is clearly written under the influence, almost verbal, of William James. She would have made good company for Susan Glaspell's Lincoln Holt who was never quite all "in any one place, at any time. For eighty-three years he had lived two lives, and between these two different lives, which corresponded only in time, he could trace no connection". So Grandfather in Ellen Glasgow's *Sheltered Life* wonders whether "the second self of his mind", his spiritual individuality, were more real than his outer social being, the "old man warming his inelastic arteries in the April sunshine."

Flux of identity has challenged much of Luigi Pirandello's attention. Although most of his writings follow a psychological school apart from James, some of his work indicates his accordance with Jamesian doctrines. Our social identity is different for each who holds us in mind.

We have all of us a false conception of an individual whole. Every whole consists in the . . . relations of its elements; . . . by altering those relations . . . we . . . alter the whole. This explains how someone who is reasonably loved by me can reasonably be hated by a third person . . . The one whom I love, and the one whom the third person hates, are by no means identical . . . We . . . can never know what reality is accorded to us by other people.

Or as Aiken has it in *Blue Voyage*: "Cynthia's conception of

Demarest is not Demarest's conception—". This philosophy is used in Pirandello's *Shoot* to explain the character of the Nesteroff. It is the basic idea of *Right You Are (if you Think So)* where Signora Panza is one person or another according to others' conceptions, and Laudisi, the *raisonneur*, is "a different person for each of us" who contemplates him. The theme is reiterated on almost every page of *One, None, and a Hundred-Thousand*, the purpose of which is to indicate "the impossibility of any human creature being to others what he is to himself." In his preoccupation with that devastating idea, Moscarda approaches madness. And in its preoccupation with Pirandelloesque flux even Hollywood ventured its *I Am Suzanne*.

III.

Here, where a "normal" contemplation of the multiplicity of the ego is becoming a psychiatric fixation, it would be well to consider abnormal mutations of identity treated in literature. For, as you may have gathered, flux "is to madness near allied". Sufficient cases have been cited to prove that the "normal" changes of self as analyzed by James are a force in our literary world. To take the step he suggests and Pirandello has bravely crossed, to advance to abnormal divisions of personality will be our line of attack. For psychiatric dissociation of character has been the root of as many literary productions as the work of James.

Morton Prince bases the phenomenon of dissociation on the belief that the ego is "a composite structure". Sidis and Goodhart agree that "the individual is an aggregate of systems of simpler individuals", and being such, can give rise to multiple personalities within one person. Those plural individuals may be alternate or co-conscious; that is, each may appear at different intervals, or they may exist simultaneously on upper and lower levels of consciousness. When a character is dissociated it abandons the rapid fluctuations observed among the creations of James' followers; dissociation is a more static condition in which flux acts at a definite time and does not act again until another vital change in the mental organism has been effected. It is not quite so unexpected. But it is no less a flux of identity because the fluctua-

tions are not incessant and may not always be co-conscious. Pierre Janet supplies us with an account of the multiple personalities of clinical experience; some of his examples are legendary, but even those add evidence to psychiatric interest in schizophrenia. Among the few cases are the Lady of Macnish who was two opposed identities alternating after periods of sleep. In a "reciprocal somnambulism", her life was divided into two portions which knew nothing of one another. It is unfortunate that she so missed the ability to blame her left hand for the mischiefs of her right hand. The majority of cases of plural identity are more subtle, more complex, including a larger number of selves. Louis Vivet observed a case which comprised in one body six different personalities, each varying in memory, character, sensibility and motion. Mollie Fancher, Abraham Daily's patient, is said to have been five different persons—a whole bureau of missing persons, in fact. The best known example of this intricate type of multiple character is Morton Prince's Miss Beauchamp. She had three principal selves, of which only one had a direct knowledge of the others, as well as personalities hypnotically produced. Although Doctor Prince believed that "no one secondary personality preserves the whole psychical life of the individual", Miss Beauchamp did succeed in living at different periods, fairly completely, the life of an "idiot" or of a "saint". B.C.A., under the direction of Morton Prince, wrote a biography of her life as a dissociated personality. She belongs in the same class as Miss Beauchamp; for her first complex had no memory of her second, but the second remembered the first and existed both alternately and co-consciously with it. Each person had different "moods, tastes, points of view, habits of thought, and controlling ideas."

The Russians were (of course?) the first who developed the idea of schizophrenia as a literary theme. A double identity is used by Dostoevsky as a complement for Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment*. Raskolnikov lies in bed, in a semi-conscious state; Arkady Svidrigailov, a stranger, appears at the door, and knows intuitively that Raskolnikov is feigning sleep. This "enigmatic other self" of the hero is introduced to make clear to Raskolnikov his own thoughts about his crime. The two have endured similar difficulties; each has been guilty of murder; each is troubled by

the visitation of ghosts. They have more than a little in common; they are birds of the selfsame feather. Henceforth Svidrigailov becomes Raskolnikov's shadow, suddenly appearing before him, eavesdropping at his conversations. Finally, when Svidrigailov commits suicide, Raskolnikov confesses. His life is renewed. He has cast off his outworn skin, his common identity with Svidrigailov. He is no longer two, but one. In *Notes from Underground*, Dostoevsky's principal character is one who must "either be a hero or . . . grovel in the mud." The writer of the notes is a double, alternating personality, each character conscious of the other's existence. An analogous phenomenon is dramatically externalized in Dostoevsky's *Double*. Golyadkin, after an unhappy experience at a dance, "was killed—killed entirely, in the full sense of the word." Immediately the "dead" Golyadkin meets a man with the same name and the same appearance as his own. He enters his house with him, sits at his office, walks, sleeps with him. Golyadkin is finally disgraced by the projection of this nefarious second self, until he is committed to an institution where he receives "free quarters, wood, with light and service . . ." Let us hope they also gave him double accommodations. The alternating beneficent and malignant needs of Peter in Merejkowski's *Peter and Alexis* are explained by recourse to dissociation of identity. Peter's "image seemed double; as in a momentary metamorphosis of a were-wolf, the Tsarevitch saw two faces—the kind, beloved face of the father, and the strange, terrible, mask-face—the face of the Beast. Yet the thing most terrifying was that he could not definitely say which of the two was the *real* face." So we comprehend that the Peter who forgives his son tenderly and the Peter who flogs him to death, are, though inhabitants of a single man, in reality two men. In his analysis of a case of insanity in *The Madman's Diary*, Nikolay Gogol gives us the autobiography of a double personality. The Madman suddenly realizes that he is not the titular counselor he actually is, but the king of Spain.

There is a king of Spain . . . I am that king . . . I can't imagine how I could imagine myself . . . a titular counselor. How could that crazy, mad idea ever have entered my head? It's a good thing no one thought of putting me in a mad-house.

Unfortunately, such is the way of the world, the titular counselor is confined to a madhouse for the plausible notion that he is the king of Spain.

Biographies of writers sometimes suggest that creative artists themselves succumb to dissociational flux. In most cases, however, (Tolstoy, T. S. Eliot, John Donne, Rimbaud), the change of life is one of conversion or moral degeneration explained often by the transition, perhaps sudden, from youth to maturity, resulting in what seems an alternating dual personality. In only one instance, that of Stendhal, is there definitely an alternating and co-conscious double identity amounting to technical dissociation. "*Qu'ai-je été?*" writes Stendhal, "*Que suis-je? En vérité, je serais bien embarrassé de le dire.*" Stefan Zweig interprets Stendhal's inability to identify himself by a cleavage in his nature inherited from the opposing personalities of his father and mother. In reading Stendhal's account of his parents, we readily see that Zweig's analysis is justifiable. "*Ma mère était l'âme et la gaieté de la famille; mon père sombre, timide, rancunier.*" Henri Beyle contained within himself, in separate compartments, appearing at different periods, or simultaneously, two contrary natures which were his through heritage. He was "doomed from the outset to be a dual personality and to live in two competing worlds." Tonio Kröger, Thomas Mann's "strayed bourgeois", is a fictional duplicate of Henri Beyle. He too is split, as his name suggests, between his conflicting bourgeois and gipsy inheritances.

To approach dissociation in the literary output of this century in America, we glance at Conrad Aiken, analyzing him from a viewpoint different from Houston Peterson's.⁶ In *Mr. Arcularis*, the "title-character" dreaming his last dream on the operating table has many unusual mental experiences; among them is the feeling that he is a dissociated being, his other self a young girl.

"I wish I could remember who you are," he said.

The girl replies: "And you—who are you?"

"Myself."

"Then perhaps I am yourself."

The same theme is more dramatically exposed in Aiken's story,

⁶*Melody of Chaos*. This study of Aiken approaches him philosophically rather than psychologically.

Smith and Jones, which recalls Dostoevsky's *Double*. The two men "looked almost exactly alike. Their names might have been interchangeable." Smith and Jones go walking with the explicit understanding that Jones, the scholar, will kill Smith, the debauchee. Jones is disappointed, however, and Smith, having slain his opponent, walks home, "alone, but with an amazing air, somehow, of having always been alone." This again is another instance of a division of identity like that in Golyadkin, or in the writer of the *Notes from Underground*. Aiken seems to believe that one part of the personality can annihilate another part and still be a complete identity. Smith is a unit without Jones. Herein he goes a step beyond Morton Prince.

Six years ago Clifford Beers wrote in *A Mind that Found Itself* his life as the subject of an abnormal obsession. He feared he would become an epileptic and that dread led to the fixation that to escape epilepsy he would commit suicide. During the period in which these delusions formed the kernel of his mental preoccupations he was dissociated definitely from his former being. He writes of his book that "it is an autobiography, and more: in part it is a biography; for in telling the story of my life, I must relate the history of another self . . ." when "I was unlike what I had been, or what I have been since." In brief, Beers lived another subordinated existence sandwiched between his life before and after a mental cataclysm. The same story is told with fictional dressing by Osbert Sitwell in *The Man Who Lost Himself*. Tristram Orlander, a youthful, sparkling poet, decides that as a lark he will ask for himself at his hotel in Spain. Immediately upon asking for Mr. Orlander, he faints and envisions an aged gentleman resembling himself, and bearing his name, and recognizes "in this elderly . . . figure—his own figure; . . . in the dead, cold eyes, his own eyes and himself." His personality changes in accordance with his vision. Orlander becomes a writer of "businessman's prose", marries a stupid woman and abandons his friends. Sitwell leaves no doubt in the reader's mind that this change is dissociation. "There had been no prostitution of his talent, . . . but . . . a chemical change that had in the end affected his character." "Chemical change" seems to be the term for conveying in picturesque phrase that which is technically a division of person-

ality. The horror of that complete degeneration is borne upon Orlander's mind before his death, when he dreams that a youth, vibrant, poetic, Tristram Orlander by name, and resembling the original bearer of that title, appears before him recalling his earlier identity. This character, like Mr. Beers, suffered a change which severed two portions of his life."

Victoria Sackville-West has written a story, which, excepting its literary adornments, may have come directly from a volume of case histories of schizophrenia. Gottfried Künstler, from the story of that title in *Thirty Clocks Strike the Hour*, after a fall on the ice, is transformed into another being, Klaus. Although Klaus does not remember Künstler and is untroubled by any of the burdens that weighed upon his original self, there is a link uniting his two personalities. Klaus fulfills the one deeply impregnated desire of Gottfried—to skate magnificently upon the ice, to live in a region of hard, bitter frost. That desire when a part of Gottfried's character was rarely satisfied, rarely articulated; but it becomes the principal characteristic of Klaus. Gottfried returns as the dominating personality at the appearance of Künstler's wife; returns with no remembrance of Klaus. "It was a horrible transformation. His very features seemed to change." Victoria Sackville-West seems to have combined some philosophy of wish-fulfillment with the idea of dissociation of identity. Klaus is a kind of dream figure who fulfills a wish of Gottfried Künstler.

There is one point of difference between this last example and those instances of dissociation which have been analyzed. Gottfried Künstler experiences a change of identity after a fall on the head; in all other cases the mutation arose, except perhaps in the case of Dostoevsky's *Double*, from no palpable basis.

IV.

The next school of psychology to be examined adds the single conception of an environmental cause to the psychology of dissociation. It makes the problem a little easier to see. That school is behaviorism. This statement will doubtless raise the question:

*Gertrude Stein, of course, could not resist the flux-temptation any more than her friend, Mr. Sitwell. In her latest output, *Saint Theresa* equals two saints of whom one is always indoors, I believe, and the other out-of-doors.

Since behaviorism discards every notion of consciousness, how can its tenets include the idea that consciousness can split, or fluctuate? The writer of this article used originally not the word *consciousness* but *identity*. Identity to the students of dissociation happens to reside somewhere in that which they term mind; identity to the behaviorists resides in behavior or personality, in the activity of the organism in its responses to external stimuli. Watson believed that personality, the behavioristic identity, could change vitally if subjected to some break or change in the environment:

Thus the only way to change personality is to remake the individual in such a way that new habits have to form . . . We can change the personality as easily as we can change the shape of the nose, only it takes more time.

Or as James Winfred Bridges puts it, "the many selves" of every man "change with changing conditions". The change in the personality may be slight, and therefore called in good patter, "re-personalization", or may involve complete dissociation. Both mutations differ from the types of flux we have analyzed by demanding some controlling environmental causation.⁷

Profoundly interested in the impossibility of trapping the identity, Pirandello writes in *Chee-Chee* of the same problem which troubled him in *Shoot* and *Onè, None and a Hundred-Thousand*, the enigma that "a man can live scattered about among a hundred thousand selves." In *Chee-Chee* the theme is treated not entirely from the viewpoint of the many people who, by opposing conceptions of a single person, cause his identity to be lost, but from the point of view of the individual who sees himself behavioristically change when faced by changing conditions. *Chee-Chee* despairs that "first we're one thing then . . . another according to time, place, and circumstances." This thesis, not a vital issue in *Chee-Chee*, was developed in many of Pirandello's earlier but

⁷A small group of Europeans, a step before Watson, were intrigued by mutations, following environmental causes, in human beings. The revolution in Tchitchikov's being, (in Gogol's *Dead Souls*), is consequent upon his worldly failure: "The inner state of his soul might be compared with a building that has been pulled down to be rebuilt into a new one, and the new one has not yet been begun, because no definite plan has come from the architect, and the workmen are left in suspense." Tchitchikov has died but has not been born again.

more important works. *Six Characters in Search of an Author* suggests that the characters in a play may be more real than human beings because literary creations are immutable whereas human beings change, not only on Jamesian principles, but along behavioristic lines. The reality of human beings is "a mere transitory . . . illusion taking this form today and that tomorrow according to the conditions." The complementary play to *Six Characters*, *Tonight we improvise*, proceeds to show how under the "environmental" influence of a participating audience, actors fluctuate into characters and from characters into human beings, living, loving and even dying in the manner planned only for the dramatic "characters". Thus, even the immutable art of *Six Characters* is malleable and fluid when embedded in the actor's life in *Tonight we improvise*. In *Henry IV* Pirandello creates a situation recalling at many points Sackville-West's *Gottfried Künstler*. A dilettante admirer of Henry IV falls from his horse during a masquerade at which he appears as that king, and after the fall, becomes, to all intents and purposes, Henry IV. Environmental conditions therefore are a greater factor in Pirandello's play than in Sackville-West's story; more is made of the fall in the first place, and in the second, it is the uncongenial twentieth century which forces the dilettante to remain Henry IV even after his recovery of sanity; whereas the impact of environment on Gottfried merely causes him to return to his first condition. Henry IV is a case of dissociation of identity resulting from environmental factors. Chee Chee's cry is reiterated in *Each in his Own Way* by the character, Diego, who perceives that flux of personality follows flux of living conditions:

That life that is . . . around us . . . is such a continuous, changing thing that if our deepest affections cannot endure against it, imagine what the case with the . . . judgments which we succeed in forming for ourselves, must be! All our ideas in short, change in the restless turmoil we call life.

Diego cannot answer his own query, "Who are you? Who am I? Who are we all?"

Proust's fund of information regarding dissociation is observable in a passage in *Le Temps Retrouvé* in which Doctor Cottard discusses schizophrenia. That Proust was more interested in reper-

sonalization caused behavioristically by the environmental factor of the passage of time is borne out by the stupendous changes of identity which overtake Morel, M. D'Argencourt, Block, Mme. de Guermantes and Gilberte. Proust can identify the ego (fortunate man!) through a form of redintegration. He eats a cake; decades later that moment's sensation flashes upon him; he tastes the "madeleine" in retrospect and so touches the kernel of his responsive being. In the flavor of a cookie, the microscopic center of self within "*les mois divers qui meurent successivement en nous*" is palpated. Not all (as perhaps we have seen?) can recapture the "pure ego" in that manner; for them, "*la perspective déformante du Temps*" is merciless. They are physically, socially and morally transformed. Even Marcel has suffered metamorphoses similar to those of the other characters. "*Le remplacement successif . . . de chaque cellule*" causes complete mutation. Time forces external change, symbolic to Proust of internal flux.

By this time, Watson had written *Behaviorism*, and his tenets, together with the continental influence, caused a group of English and American authors to handle flux of identity from a behavioristic viewpoint. Passage of time, as in Proust, is the environmental basis of fluctuations in identity in some of Conrad Aiken's writings. In *White Nocturne* he says:

Yes, we have changed, slowly and silently changed;
We are the hungry ghosts of the selves we knew;

and difficult it is to surmise

That once, long ago, we were the 'I' and the 'you'
Who stood bewildered under an April sky.

The idea is reiterated in the *Great Circle*. Bertha changes under changing conditions.

Who was Bertha? Bertha, to begin with, then Bertha plus one, Bertha plus two, Bertha plus three: never the same again . . . And now, . . . it was Bertha plus four.

In Aiken's short story, *The Disciple*, one particular period of time, called significantly the "slow crucifixion" of middle age, impels the middle-aged, bored, half-mad Dace to become the ancient Judas and every modern Judas of Salt Lake City, Buenos Ayres, and all points West.

There are environmental factors other than blows on the head or the passage of time which effect change in personality. So Gustav von Aschenbach after a visit to Italy finds not only death but complete degeneration in Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice*. A salutary obsession is the environmental motivation of Wayne Hudson's change, in Lloyd Douglas' *Magnificent Obsession*, from professional and personal failure to recognition and success. Influenced by Randolph, Hudson believes that secret philanthropic practices will enable him to develop his personality by its projection into other personalities. The spring-board of his behavioristic change constitutes itself a fluctuation of his identity into other characters. A second behavioristic flux occurs after Billy Merrick's rescue from drowning at the expense of Hudson's life. Not merely does Merrick change, but in changing he becomes Hudson, following the latter's career, adopting to some extent his obsession, and marrying his widow. The two behavioristic changes in this book are occasioned in the first case by the fluctuation of Hudson's self into other selves, and result in the second case with a projection of Merrick's self into Hudson's identity. The same double fluctuation as in Merrick's character appears in O'Neill's *Mourning Becomes Electra*. Lavinia, innately endowed with her mother's appearance and passions, allows the Mannon mask to hide those characteristics until her liberation through Christine's suicide. Then, permitting those latent similarities to blossom, wearing her mother's colors, she changes in soul until "little by little it grew like Mother's soul". Lavinia changes, after an environmental motif, and in changing, becomes another. Her second, retrogressive flux is behavioristic, consequent upon Orin's suicide. Ernest Sutherland Bates in a satiric survey of the career of Walter Lippmann in the *Modern Monthly* points out that the latter has undergone successive metamorphoses to satisfy the demands of a changing political environment.

Mr. Lippmann has risen to his present position on the stepping-stones of many dead Mr. Lippmanns. His path is strewn with the ruins of himself. Emblem of his period, he has been the very incarnation of Heraclitean flux.

A widely read, much discussed novel, Hervey Allen's *Anthony Adverse*, derives its structural form from the behavioristic change

of Anthony's personality. Anthony, he who played with his image in the water, who saw the world from a tree top, who desired to become like the image on Mr. Bonnyfeather's locket, Anthony with all the potentialities of the brave, god-knowing Lonely Twin, that Anthony becomes for a time, at the provocation of the "cruel, stark realities of the life about him" and under the influence of Cibo's mammalian philosophy, a mammal himself. His identity becomes that of the "Bronze Boy near the convent lake whose expression never changed". "For he *had* succeeded in becoming that impervious, expressionless bronze boy that stood watching the river of existence flow through the fountain." Yet Anthony abandons, in the nightmare conflict near Futa-Jaloon, his slave-countenancing, Bronze Boy identity, and unclosets his soul, becoming at long last, the Lonely Twin "who had departed from his brother's side by the fountain ages ago", the missing twin who carries Christ in his heart.

V.

There is a subordinate behavioristic change in *Anthony Adverse*, reserved for discussion until this point because it will carry us across to another school of psychology. After the Parisian fiasco (environmental influence) Ouvrard, the financier, experiences a dissociation. "I am at the present time not one but two men. That is, I know I could become either one of two persons". He might remain J. G. Ouvrard, financier, or he might become "that fellow who is so interested in shoes". Up to this point the changes that occurred in the characters discussed were, if voluntary, assumed to fulfill personal, often subconscious, desires or demands of the world at large. For Ouvrard to become a "fellow who is so interested in shoes" would meet neither external demands nor internal desires. The reason for his adoption of such an individuality is simply his preoccupation with Spanish shoes, until the shoes, through the process of association, become a major part of his personality.

It is fluctuation of identity set in motion by the psychology of association that we are now to investigate. Embedded in Ebbinghaus' work in association is the doctrine that "the simple con-

nection of a series (a, b, c) might be complicated in such a way that the recall of b was in part also the recall of c , and in fact, a second series (a, c, e) was found to be created by the act of forming the first series." B may suggest c through some real or supposed similarity between them; henceforth c will be associated with b , until the two become indistinguishable, or until b becomes c , or c, b .

T. S. Eliot's *Waste Land* applies this theory. Again whether this application be conscious or otherwise is beside the point; the significant fact is that the literature recalls a version of Ebbinghaus which, whether learned through a perusal of his work or through oral discussion, is irrelevant. In the *Waste Land* "the one-eyed merchant . . . melts into the Phoenician Sailor, and the latter is not wholly distinct from Ferdinand . . . of Naples . . ." The merchant is associated with the sailor until he becomes the sailor; the latter is associated with the Prince until he appropriates Ferdinand's identity. Similarly, the Hanged Man of the Tarot pack of cards is associated with Frazer's Hanged Man who in turn suggests the hooded figure in the disciples' passage to Emmaus. The Tarot Hanged Man becomes Frazer's Hanged Man and the latter merges into the hooded figure.*

There are, however, some less "literary" examples of flux of identity actuated by association. When a man identifies himself with that which occupies his attention, that identification is the result of an intermediary process in which he is associated with what he finally becomes. One is interested in a star, one is associated with that star, one is identified in his own mind and in the notions of others, with that star. That is the associational process of flux of identity. The subject becomes the object of thought. After "becoming a star" the man may fluctuate into something else through a repetition of the process in terms of another object engaging his attention. So Simone Pau in Pirandello's *Shoot* declares, "What are we? We are whatever, at any given moment, occupies our attention. I am the mountain, I am

*It may be objected, however, that this flux of identity is purely imaginary; the merchant does not really become the sailor, but commingles with him only to him who associates the two. This objection may be answered in Berkeleyan terms: it is not more real for one to think his own identity is changing than for another to think so.

the tree, I am the sea." Shot through Conrad Aiken's conception of flux of identity is the flux propelled by this process. Senlin, preoccupied and associated in turn with a forest, a city, a pyramid, a house, becomes all these objects in turn.

Is Senlin a grain of sand beneath our footsteps?

So in *The Charnal Rose*, the lover, perhaps through associations more mystical, becomes "a star on trembling water, a breath among the tulips", becomes "men with bristling torches", becomes Christ. The theme is reiterated in *Preludes for Memnon*:

... you, because you think of these, are both
Frost and flower, the bright ambiguous syllable
Of which the meaning is both no and yes.

"The 'I' changes and with it the 'you' in the flowing of shape to shape" with which the "I" and the "you" are associated.

VI.

In our analysis of these four schools of psychology with the influence exerted by each on one phase of modern literature, we have advanced enough points and examples to assert that flux of man's personal identity as motivated by psychology is a force in the twentieth century literary world.

In the manner of authoritative literary critics, it would be well to conclude with a list of conclusions: through such a fact and such a fact, ad nauseam, we have proved that flux of identity, based mainly on certain schools of psychology, is a significant modern literary motif. Yet, it seems that one fact only is required to prove an idea current. Has that idea been satirised? If so, it has run the gamut of being seriously considered, and is probably strong enough to endure a little poking in the ribs. Flux of identity had such a little poking in a recent *New Yorker* skit on the seven-bodied Eugene O'Neill, and in *Goodbye Again*, first produced December, 1932. Julie, after being told that she was not the heroine of Ken's novel, bemoans that fact as follows: "Do you know what you've done? You've killed—the other me!" Ken explains that "Julie and I always claimed that there were two of each of us. There is the real person who eats and sleeps, whom everyone sees—and then there is that other, *unreal* person who

lives in a world all by himself." The sceptical Harvey, Julie's husband, turns to his wife, and in gentlemanly wise suggests, "Well, I guess I'll haul all four of me home."

In similar fashion, the writer thinks it about time she took the infinity of her selves for an airing.

by L. Robert Lind

SPIDER

If we could clutch at last the final strand
Of this weird tangle, ravel to the loom
The silver thread that brushes face and hand,
Stretched in the doorway of a dusty room;
If we could know what secret spinner there,
Sunless in solitude, weaves out the net
That clings across our eyes, upon our hair,
We could outwit, and hope to flee him yet.

Loop over loop he winds the silken cord
Out of a dusky body, and we bind,
Like helpless birds who, but for traps, had soared,
That hermit-woof around the mortal mind:

Cobweb of learning, fallen on the brain,
It will not ever set us free again!

by George W. Howgate

SANTAYANA AND HUMANISM

NOT always has Mr. Santayana been so far from humanism as he seems today. A competent observer at the turn of the century with enough of the prophet in him to foresee the new humanist movement might even have visioned at its head George Santayana, then a young poet and teacher of philosophy at Harvard, whose *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion* (1900) had just proclaimed critical canons in which there was more than a suggestion of our present humanism. In fact, Professor Norman Foerster, looking backward in order to compile a bibliography of recent humanistic literature for his symposium, *Humanism and America* (1930), lists as his first item Santayana's *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion*.

In this volume Santayana attempted to place poetry and religion on a strictly human basis as the two finest fruits of man's imagination. "Poetry," he said, "is arrested in its development if it remains an unmeaning play of fancy without relevance to the ideals of life . . . Its deepest beauty comes from its response to the ultimate demands of the soul." The poetry of barbarism, i.e., of Whitman and Browning, he roundly belabored as a "rebellion against discipline, in the abandonment of the ideals of classic and Christian tradition." Shakespeare was gently rebuked for his lack of religion, and for his lack of an all-inclusive view of life. Such pronouncements might be found in any recent humanist volume. Paul Elmer More, coming champion of humanism, writing in the *Harvard Graduates' Magazine*, September, 1900, accorded the book unstinted praise as the "wisest and most fascinating work in constructive criticism that has appeared in English for several years." He found the judgment "discriminating and profound", particularly the estimate of Browning, which he called "keen and consummately wise."

No further work of Santayana's is included in Professor

Foerster's bibliography. By 1910 the praise of the humanists is more reserved and a feeling of distrust has crept in. *The Nation*, under the editorship of Paul Elmer More, finds in reviewing Santayana's *Three Philosophical Poets* (1910) that in spite of brilliant critical passages the book is marred by "a lack of central veracity in the critic's own philosophy", "a disquieting touch of make believe." A taint of aestheticism latent in *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion* is fully developed here. To the reviewer there is something naïve in the notion of the "perfect poet of the 'new religion' and the 'new art' who shall take his dreams very seriously, yet know there is nothing obligatory about them." Moreover, in the appreciation of Lucretius, humanist nostrils catch more than a faint whiff of atheistic materialism. By 1913 the same *Nation*, reviewing *Winds of Doctrine*, feels free to brand Santayana as a "materialistic naturalist", and to regret that a man of his parts sees fit to "burrow downward toward the primitive." The humanists will have nothing further to do with him. Aestheticism and materialism, taken separately, offend them more than a little; a philosophy which combines both is simply not to be tolerated.

Santayana himself is quite aware of the effect of his philosophy upon his "friendly critics." In *Soliloquies in England* (1923) he says, "Those whose religion is of the anxious and intolerant sort . . . think my morality very loose . . . I am a pagan and a moral sceptic in my naturalism; on the other hand (and this seems a contradiction to them) my moral philosophy looks strangely negative and narrow; a philosophy of abstention and distaste for life. What a horrible combination, they say to themselves, of moral license with moral poverty."

Humanism in turn is just as distasteful to Santayana. He identifies it with the "genteel tradition", which, instead of "dying gracefully or melting into the active mind of the country", as seemed the case twenty years ago, has now become heroic in its death agonies. As early as 1911 Santayana used the phrase "the genteel tradition" as the title of a lecture delivered before the Philosophical Union in California, a lecture dealing with New England philosophy and culture at various periods of American history. The essence of the genteel tradition Santayana believes to be the Calvinism of the New England Puritans. This in turn

has been softened by transcendentalism and centuries of New England culture into a tradition humane, urbane, mildly dogmatic and intensely conservative. Naturally the "genteel tradition" is essentially foreign to the instinctive, work-a-day American spirit, in the words of Santayana, the "feminine gush" and "masculine go."

It seems to me, however, that this "genteel tradition" is a synthesis too easily achieved. Any statement which can include in one breath Jonathan Edwards, Emerson, and Irving Babbitt, is somewhat diaphanous. Moreover, there is not enough distinction between academic philosophy, always derivative in American thought, and its practical applications. These applications were not metaphysical at all, but religious, literary, and even sociological. To say that New England Puritanism was merely Calvinism, that transcendentalism was merely German Idealism, explains neither the religion as opposed to the theology of Edwards nor the literary philosophy as opposed to the metaphysics of Emerson—nor Brook Farm, for that matter.

In spite of this objection, Santayana's comments on the new humanism are in many instances illuminating. He shows that the Renaissance humanism was underneath a "many sided insurrection of the unregenerate natural man, with all his physical powers and affinities, against the regimen of Christendom." Indeed the old humanism had in it the seeds of both the unselective expansiveness of modern romanticism and the narrow specialization of modern science. The new humanism to Santayana seems more the descendant of medieval scholasticism than of Renaissance humanism, even a fragment of the urn of Christianity shattered by the three R's: Renaissance, Reformation, Revolution, the roots of the modern world. He really defines for humanism its pedigree more accurately than some humanists have done. With such a pedigree humanism should openly acknowledge supernatural sanctions; in fact such a procedure would more clearly define its relation to religion. In certain respects the humanists have tacitly made this acknowledgment. Although they avoid the notion of divinity, their "ethical imagination" is certainly above natural explanation or natural control. And for the authority of the church they substitute the authority of tradition crystallized

in the finest minds of civilization, thereby securing a universal moral criterion, which is the aim of all religion.

Santayana meanwhile has been gradually drifting away from universal moral criteria. In *The Life of Reason* (1905), he measured humanity for the first and last time by an arbitrary ethical standard. Age and the war shattered his faith in any panacea for mankind in the abstract, but his rambles about the English countryside bred in him more of a sympathy with the flesh and blood man, a growing tolerance of the irrational instincts and longings which are, as he says, the "atmosphere of the inner man", "the weather in his soul."

I cannot conceive of his agreeing with Paul Elmer More that "Happiness is the feeling that accompanies the governing of our impulses by the inner check." That would seem to him a strangely negative sort of morality. To Santayana morality consists in understanding the physical nature, in harmonizing its discords perhaps, but mostly in rising above it entirely. Since the spirit is free in that sense,—to impose upon all men an ideal pattern of life, however hallowed by tradition and antiquity, is nothing short of an impertinence. He says, in *Soliloquies in England* (1923), "I wish individuals and races and nations to be themselves, and to multiply the forms of perfection and happiness as nature prompts them. The good, as I conceive it, is happiness, happiness for each man after his own heart, and for each hour according to its inspiration."

The danger inherent in this point of view is that in the interests of broad sympathy and tolerance some moral strength of fibre, some critical selectivity, will be lost. Everything tends to blur in a soft twilight, wherein all cats look gray. I am reminded of a delightful fantasy of Mr. E. M. Forster, "The Point of It." Sir Michael lived a blameless life, mild, sympathetic, warmed by the love of humanity; middle age softened him into respectable mediocrity, a purveyor of lukewarm aphorisms pleasantly couched for an appreciative public. His wife, on the contrary, was a zealot for truth; age hardened her, embittered her, dried up her human sympathies. After death they found themselves in separate heavens, one for the soft, one for the hard; and Forster's comment is significant: "The years are bound either to liquefy a man or to

stiffen him, and Love and Truth, who seem to contend for our souls like angels, hold each the seeds of our decay." There is a lesson here for both Santayana and the humanists.

The question has as much pertinence for the historian and critic of literature as for the moralist. The whole matter of absolute standards is bound up with the choice of the "hard" or the "soft" point of view. Santayana debated this question as early as 1890 in an article written for the *Harvard Monthly* and entitled "Walt Whitman: a Dialogue." McStout champions the "hard" cause; Van Tender, the "soft". Van Tender pleads for freshness and originality in poetry, and maintains that all themes and subjects are suitable for treatment in verse. McStout replies by upholding universal standards of what is and what is not suitable, argues for the normal as against the eccentric, for restraint as against license. To his mind the creative impulse is constantly straining at its tether, constantly alert for new pastures; it is prolific and diffuse and needs the check of the critical impulse to keep it sane and wholesome and relevant to human interests. Santayana, then under the sway of the Catholic and Platonic traditions, speaks more sincerely and vigorously through McStout than Van Tender; and it must be admitted he has always been more of a dogmatist in literary matters than in ethical.

There is still in Santayana a good deal of what Dickinson Miller aptly called "the adamant underneath". The following note I received from Santayana not long ago will show exactly where he stands today in regard to the McStout-Van Tender antinomy: "The antinomy MacStout-Van Tender has always had a clear solution—a Spinozistic solution—in my own mind. All my oscillations are within legitimate bounds. For the solution is this: Moral bias is necessary to life: but no particular form of life is necessary to the universe (or even to the human intellect, except the form of intellect itself). All contrary moralities are therefore equally acceptable *prima facie*: but the one organic to any particular species, or nation, or religion, or man must be maintained *there* unflinchingly, without compromise or heresy." In this statement there is an effort to reconcile the hard and soft points of view, to admit absolute standards on general principle but to restrict narrowly their field of application.

II.

It is to be hoped that something beneficial may come from this conflict of the "soft" Santayana and the "hard" humanists, for both stand for some of the most constructive thinking of our day. I can but suggest here a few of the problems to be faced. In the first place, the conflict over first principles must be resolved. It must be remembered that Santayana, no less than the humanists, has devoted his life to the determination of the characteristically human. The difficulty is that, being human, everyone differs as to what is human. To Santayana the highest manifestation of human nature is what he calls the "spirit", to the humanists it is the "higher will" or the "ethical imagination". This is not merely a difference in nomenclature. The "ethical imagination" is one side of man's dual nature; opposed to it are his natural instincts and impulses. These are the higher and lower planes of his being, his kinship with the animal and his adumbration of the divine. This ethical imagination, deeper than reason, more stable than emotion, is his human prerogative; the remainder goes over into the category of the natural; it is nature working through man. Santayana is likewise a dualist, but his microcosm is differently halved. On the one hand is the "psyche", the "specific form of physical life, present and potential, asserting itself in any plant or animal"; on the other is the spirit, in his words, "the actual light of consciousness falling upon anything, the ultimate invisible emotional fruition of life in feeling and thought." The most important point of disagreement between Santayana's philosophy and humanism goes back to the old controversy between free-will and determinism. Whereas the "ethical imagination" is free to impose its will upon natural impulses, the "spirit" is materially bound to its roots in the "psyche" and has no causative power whatsoever. It has, moreover, no relation to any world-soul or over-soul and is in no sense divine. In the play of consciousness it is less an actor than a spectator, or at least its rôle is completely determined for it by the individual's physical constitution, the "psyche". In its passive way, however, the "spirit" gives meaning to everything upon which it alights, transposing "essences into appearances and things into objects of belief" and giving them a

"moral actuality which in their logical being or their material flux they had never aspired to have."

The difference between the humanists' point of view and Santayana's is as important for literary criticism as it is for ethics. Both the humanists and Santayana have been instrumental in taking a considerable portion of the wind from the sails of the romantic movement. Their respective attacks, however, have been based on different principles and have emphasized entirely different aspects of the movement. On what is to both the lowest level of romanticism they have united in condemning Walt Whitman, and for what seem to be the same reasons. There is, however, if one looks closer, a marked difference in their objections to Whitman. Santayana looks down upon Whitman because he is so absorbed by the pageant of existence that he forgets to see rising above the flux those ideal peaks of aspiration and contemplation which constitute the spiritual life. The humanists dislike Whitman because he reduces humanity to the level of natural impulse, the animal state from which man has gradually ascended. In either judgment Whitman has obliterated the dualistic distinction so dear to the heart of each critic; he has failed to mark off on the one hand the ideal from the material, and on the other the human from the natural. These two dualisms are not quite identical. The natural *per se* wears no garment of evil in Santayana's eyes as it does in the eyes of the humanists; in fact, Whitman's strength is, to Santayana, the very real tribute he pays the natural springs of conduct. He errs in being blind to a fourth spiritual dimension; he has no vision of a "realm of essence". At a higher level of romanticism it is easier to see the divergence of the two points of attack. Among the great romanticists the archfiend is to Santayana, Browning; to the humanists, Shelley. Browning, Santayana believes, is almost as submerged as is Whitman by the flood of transient experience; he has his finger on the quick pulse of immediacy, he feels the vibrations of life as it is being lived, but he has no repose, no perspective, no sense of ideal values. The humanists, being less philosophical, are appeased by the surface Christian orthodoxy in Browning and gratified by his energetic optimism. They see in Shelley, however, a vagrant individualism, a defiance of tradition, a shallow Rousseau-like humanitarianism, and an utter indifference to discipline. Discipline, in the sense of

a discipline of the human will, is of course rank Puritanism to Santayana; nature is a sufficient taskmaster; it is the human being's privilege to escape from the thralldom of matter; the spiritual life is all liberty rather than restraint or control. Thus he sides with Shelley, who, contrary to Matthew Arnold's famous opinion, has all human aspiration for the subject matter of his poems. He describes the realm of the ideal as perhaps no other poet has done; he is only naïve in expecting the realization of his ideals in a material world.

III.

To return to modern America, Santayana's portrait of the American is more flattering than is the humanists'. "When the senses are sharp, as they are in the American," he says, "they are already half liberated, already a joy in themselves; and when the heart is warm, like his, and eager to be just, its ideal destiny can hardly be doubtful. It will not be always merely pumping and working; time and its own impulses will lend it wings." The humanists are unwilling to wait for "time and its own pulses", and they are right, I believe. Although they must understand the American heart better than they do at present, it will be their task to lead the American nearer to things of the center, to develop in him a greater power of selection, a stronger self-criticism and self-discipline.

But I believe the humanistic program is inadequate beyond this point. In practice its emphasis tends to be negative; its temper, coercive. Just here may a philosophy such as Santayana's, through its despised materialism and aestheticism, supplement the work of the humanists. The American, having been disciplined, can well afford to acquire more repose, more tolerance, more grace. Santayana's point of view may lead him to recognize pure beauty, pure spirit, and cultivate a steady sense of what is ideally best. The three possible attitudes toward life consonant with truth and beauty Santayana sums up in a brilliant epigram in *Soliloquies in England*: "Everything in nature is lyrical in its ideal essence, tragic in its fate, and comic in its existence." These three stops on the organ of life will give beauty and richness to every note of the human scale. The tragedy of life is never absent to him who sees

it through the long vista of the flux of existence, and no one can see it steadily and see it whole without detecting the tragic cast. "The foot of the cross—I dare not say the cross itself—is a good station from which to survey existence. In the greatest griefs there is a tragic calm; the fury of the will is exhausted, and our thoughts rise to another level . . . The dark background which death supplies brings out the tender colors of life in all their purity . . . to live in the shadow of death and of the cross is to spread a large nimbus of peace around our littleness." If, on the other hand, we do not take the long view of existence but enjoy it as it passes, life becomes a carnival of comic masks. Viewed in that light, "existence is nothing tragic or sad, but rather something joyful, hearty, and merry . . . Existence involves changes and happenings and is comic inherently, like a pun that begins with one meaning and ends with another. The mishaps, the expedients, the merry solutions of comedy, in which everybody acknowledges himself beaten and deceived, yet is the happier for the unexpected posture of affairs, belong to the very texture of temporal being." Most lovely, however, is nature when viewed in its lyrical essence. Then can the truly contemplative mind in the song of the skylark, in the hand-clasp of a friend, in the postulates of a theorem, in the eucharist of the church lose itself, surmount its basis in nature and enjoy the free play which is the divine prerogative of spirit.

The ecstatic love of pure beauty, the calm acceptance of man's natural state, the genuine comic spirit, in the Meredithian sense, these three attitudes of a well-rounded humanity are perhaps Santayana's most substantial legacy to America.

by Louis Untermeyer

MERRILL MOORE

A COMMENT ON HIS "AMERICAN" SONNET

WHEN Merrill Moore's *The Noise that Time Makes* was published about five years ago, I wrote an article in which I said that, though the volume contained one hundred sonnets, the young author had written almost eighteen hundred. I was wrong. Recently I went through the filing cabinet which Dr. Moore has had to install in his home and, apart from some five thousand fragmentary pieces, I counted approximately twenty-five thousand idiomatic, hybrid, or "American" sonnets.

This mathematical truth is, I believe, unprecedented in the history of literature and the circumstance is incredible. To make it faintly plausible one must think of the author as a pundit, an immured octogenarian, devoting all his hours to the fashioning and perfecting of his inflexible models. Nothing could be further from the fact. Merrill Moore is thirty-one, son of the late John Trotwood Moore, whose works are listed in the Dictionary of American Biography. Instead of being a recluse, he instructs in the Harvard Medical School, pursues his researches in neuro-psychiatry at the Boston City and Boston Psychopathic Hospitals, and practices privately. He is the active father of two young boys and, unable to release sufficient energy in the capacities of doctor, author, and paterfamilias, he is a semi-professional swimmer, competing annually in the twelve-mile race from Charleston to Boston Light. During the last two years he has assumed the duties of editor, in which rôle he is collecting and revising voluminous studies with his chief, Dr. Harry Solomon, in the problems of syphilis of the nervous system.

When, then, does he manage to compose his sonnets? The answer, to be accurate, is that he does not compose them; he improvises them. He dictates them to his wife, jots them down in shorthand between cases, forms them driving home during pauses

in traffic while the lights change from red to green. The box of fourteen lines is so fixed in his mind that his casual fancies as well as his deeper conclusions are cast in the pattern. Since his eighteenth year he has written an average of five sonnets a day. There have, obviously, been uncreative days, but, to compensate for such lapses, he has written as many as a hundred in a four-hour period. Thus the sonnets—spontaneously conceived and immediately executed—have mounted so that, at the rate of eighteen hundred a year, there are now, at the end of fourteen years, some twenty-five thousand sonnets.

Naturally, the poems are by no means on one level of interest, quality, or accomplishment. The first batch of one thousand which I saw, and which I read at for about a year, revealed that Dr. Moore has little taste about his own poems and less selective ability. He seems to be dependent on three or four friends whenever he contemplates publishing a volume. He is rarely able to improve a single sonnet; he lacks not only the time, but has real difficulty even in revising one. It was the custom of the *Fugitives* at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, to read their manuscripts to each other, criticize the product, and submit the work for further appraisal at the next meeting. Moore, however, was the exception. Instead of refining his poem, he would go to his room and promptly write ten or twelve new poems. This is as true today as it was ten years ago. Sometimes he attempts the troublesome labor of revision. But each attempt at correction suggests a new idea; and his mind, extended and almost explosive, shoots off along new tangents. It is as if his twenty-five thousand sonnets were an incomplete compensation for his failure to write the ideal sonnet every poet must dream of completing.

One senses this in the very drive and diversity of the poems in *The Noise that Time Makes* and those which have appeared subsequently. There are no changes in manner, no slackening in pace, none of the signs of "growth" so dear to the critical appraiser. In almost every case three or four poems result from the single idea which, as a finished and highly idealized concept, germinates in the poet's mind. The perfect poem may be thought of as existing in the eye of the imagination as something shining at *A*, a goal remote in time and space. But when the poem is

written down it arrives at an entirely different destination, and turns out to be quite another affair: a star, so to speak, at *B*. The poet, still aiming at *A*, starts again. But this time he achieves something at *C*,—or, if the process is repeated, *D*, *E*, or *X*.

To change the figure, it is as if his flood of quickly igniting thoughts were impelled by recollections, sights, sounds, smells, the look and feel of words, with all their complex associations. These associations, intuitions, and memories both help and hinder each other, and in the clash the poem appears. This paradox of creation and conflict, this order out of chaos, is common to every poet; in the case of Dr. Moore the process is somewhat more self-revealing. The factor that frequently deranges his aim is probably that his intuitions and unconscious associations are not in league with and often opposed to his conscious intention.

But if the consequence is a multiplicity of effects rather than a single finality, the result is a phenomenon of unusual interest. Separate a hundred sonnets haphazardly from the mass and you will find a flow and immediacy of communication unsurpassed in contemporary letters. Everything is here in rich disorganization—a genre picture, a case-history, a dream landscape, a seasoned philosophy, a story in journalese, a miniature drama, or the play of free associations—integrated only by the vision of the poet. The collection reveals the method and, from the standpoint of the perfectionist, suffers from the author's very spontaneity. Some of the sonnets are delicately suggestive condensations; others are sharply drawn with edged epithets; others are cloudy and obscure, as if they were intended for private memoranda that are no longer significant and not even comprehensible to the author. ("When I wrote that God and I knew what it meant. Today only God knows it.") But there is never a paucity of feeling, nor an impoverishment of the imagination, nor a retreat into technique for its own sake, the trick of mannerism, nor allegiance to any school which may be the fashion of the moment.

I have referred to Dr. Moore's sonnets as "American," and he may well be pioneering in a variety of the form as native as Petrarch's arrangement was Italian and Shakespeare's was English. There is something distinct and, I believe, autochthonous in the loosened, speech-inflected rhythms, in the heightened tempo

of the lines; in the substitution of a set of unpredictable, sometimes jagged, and even syncopated rhymes, instead of well regulated rhyme-schemes; in the refusal of the poem to split neatly into traditional octave and sestet, and dividing itself anywhere with what seems sheer perversity—all held, somehow, within the prescribed, though no longer formal, fourteen lines.

But these sonnets are American in a broader sense. They are not, I must add, braggart; they do not celebrate any particular section of the country; there is none of the loud spread-eagle affirmation which is a not unnatural reaction to the contempt and weariness of a negative "lost" generation. This poetry is American in attitude as well as in subject-matter—in its insatiable appetite and unsated curiosity, in its combination of naïve egotism and astounding detachment, its excesses of awe and flippancy, of puzzled insecurity, a nonchalance and eagerness "to match with Destiny for beers."

And what about the quality of the sonnets themselves? They are, as I have implied, uneven. Many could be improved by a closer scrutiny of the material; many more are spoiled by flat phrases and feeble conclusions. But every other sonnet is, at least, printable; one out of every ten sonnets is novel and arresting; and one out of every twenty is distinguished by its power and depth of utterance. At the lowest count, then, Merrill Moore has written over twelve hundred sonnets, any score of which might make a poet's reputation. And Dr. Moore is at the beginning of his thirties, in the flush of his creative energies. He may well publish, in a series of cumulative volumes, a transcript of our times at once objective and analytical—a *Comédie Humaine* written entirely in sonnets. I hope to live to read it.

The poems by Merrill Moore which follow were selected by me. Obviously they do not reflect Mr. Untermeyer's preferences. I am alone responsible for their selection. My principle in choosing these fourteen samples out of the then existing and completed 17,628 possible "Sonnets" of Merrill Moore was simply that of variety. I personally like every one, however unique it is, for its special quality.

—THE EDITOR.

by Merrill Moore

ESQUIRE

But you see many more days on ahead,—
Do you not, sir?—long days of derby hats,
Suspenders, belts and taxicabs and spats,
Moronic clubs and vile untasting beer
And mornings whose approach you hate and fear
And hours when you are fed and fed and fed
With what, for what, by what, (why hell!) and still
Neither the silence nor the noises kill.

Gone are the days—dismembered the bright shape
That new moons used to bring and the new grape,

Warm summer nights and happy, laughing crowds
Of young eyes—in the distance do you see,

Do you not see, sir, sunsets and the clouds
Banking them high in chastened memory?

CITY TRAFFIC IN THE AUTO AGE

Motors leap like jaguars in the traffic
With the quick decision steel has got
While the walking and the driving public
Lets its muscles move on reflex thought.

Lights change: ruby subterranean
Turns the vivid glint of ice-berg's green,

As down the streets of the metropolis
And up it go processions that histories
Of other planets never saw before,

Headlights blink and glow and fenders stare
Silent an instant, vibrating the air
From their mudless polish, mirroring back
The quiet houses by the mobile track.

LE PRINCE DE GALES
THE PRINCE OF WALES
EL PRINCIPE DE GALLOS
DER PRINZ VON WAHLEN

My admiration for the Prince of Wales
Is far-flung as a fleet of royal sails.

Poor fellow, duties he must do as prince,
Endless, fatiguing, and yet never wince,

The clothes, the uniforms he has to wear
And shave his face and brush his British hair,

The letters he receives and telegrams
To be answered outweigh several Buckingham's,

The gentle dignity he must preserve
And not lack tact or thought or wit or verve,

What he must sponsor, where officiate,
Events witness, documents dictate . . .

As deep as cotton in a thousand bales
My admiration for the Prince of Wales!

O GLIMMERING WORLD

O glimmering world, so dangerous, so bright,
With Time the sands that rim your seas are white
And whiter on them bleach the gleaming bones
Of those you gnawed and polished, earlier ones

Than these that garbed in muscle and in flesh
Walk your streets today beside the sea
Besieging you with frantic cry and wish
For emptiness and for satiety

And earlier too than those that are not born—
Unthinkable thought and unpronounceable name
Of unmined honor and of unreaped fame,
Of fruit unbudded, or unsprouted corn—

O glittering world, so dangerous and bright,
With Time the sands that rim your seas are white!

CELEBRATE THE VINE

I would celebrate the lowly vine;
I would celebrate the vine because
It can confute so many foolish laws,
It, the mother of vinegar, father of wine—
Those opposites of life's drink as you recall,
Vinegar sopped the sponge after the fall
Of Jesus, after the wedding where he turned
Water, the simple stuff, into richest wine
Wine the result and wine the ardent cause
Of subjective triumph and objective fall—

I would celebrate the fruit, the vine
Here because of heaven and also because
Of hell, because of order and the laws
That moulded it out of chaos: Evoe! The Vine!

MR. DAVENPORT'S WISH IS IGNORED

'No hunting, trapping or trespassing' signs
Upon his land the owner Davenport
Erects, that all who take or kill in sport
Go elsewhere or alter their designs.

But beasts and birds that read no human words
Continue to come there, devour and prey
Upon each other singly and in hordes
And hunt and kill and eat or let decay . . .

And so with mortals from the city near;
Small boys come there a-trapping—lovers too
In pairs trespassing when the nights are clear
Do what lovers there are wont to do—

So it is now, so will it be the day
When Mr. Davenport is gone away.

IDOLS ARE IN THE JUNGLE OF HIS HEART

He keeps them there because they give him something,
Something he is not quite unaware of,
Something perhaps below, perhaps above
The amount of what he has found his reason worth
Or something above or something under the earth
And something valuable to hate or love.

He keeps them out of anger, yet he does
It always with a paradox compassion,
For are not lips once scarlet now turned ashen
And is it not done always in this fashion?

—It is,—they are. So he applies the lash on
To delicate backs or onto brutal backs
Whenever they rise to impede him in their tracks
But what the jungle replies is a terrible thing!

OFFICE ASSISTANT THAT GOT ON MY NERVES

He had the damndest and most irritating
Way of talking, of reading telegrams
To me, he was always getting himself in jams
And coming to me to see if I were able
To get him out;—he jittered always, always,
On Sundays just as badly as on week-days,
And he always took rapid steps or quick short steps,
And his hands always fluttered and always tiny drops
Of perspiration stood on his forehead
And occasionally when he sneezed hard his nose bled:

As office assistant I have never had
So trying, tiring a person to work with
And yet his manners were meant to be the breath
Of courtesy and deference and control!

THE BEAST THAT DAY WAS AN UNHOLY SIGHT TO SEE

Yes, I know it, I saw it, I heard it, too.
You would not say? I saw, I understood,
I arranged it, set the work out to do
And set it there for you to see if you would
And feel and hear and know it. It was good
That you came no earlier; instead of one then two
Might have been needed and another mood
Might have resulted that it could not undo

As easily as it undid all the past,
As if its hour might have been the last,
As if its message always were the best.
As if it turned eyes finally to the west
And made them full-forgetful of the east
And more keen toward the capering of the beast.

OPERATOR, I WANT TO SPEAK TO WILLIAM
TRIMBLETOE

Hello, this is Thomas à Tattamus,
Hello, hello! Are you there? Hello!
William, this is Thomas à Tattamus,
This is Thomas à Tattamus speaking, hello,
Over the wires of literature that run
From your time and place in libraries to our own,
Over the skeins of person, place and thing
That Fortunatus is busily unrolling;

I have a question, William, to ask you,
I have heard, and tell me, is it true
That Love is merciless, cruel and unkind,
And Beauty painful?

Yes, you say *Love is blind*
And Beauty is a fiery doulour—I believe
What you say; the dead would not deceive.

EYES OF ROCK AGATE

Out of this union what else could arise
But eyes of destiny, rock-agate eyes;
Anything else would give cause for surprise.

If everyone were dead, the world would still
Careen like a leviathan across
Its pathway, like the murdered albatross
The world would swing, the world would swing until

It came somewhere to rest, but no such eyes
Would ever be made again by destinies
From these two persons except rock-agate eyes.

I have seen them in the country, I have seen
Them in the city where the parks are green
In summer—by the peaks and by the sea
Rock-agate holds their eyes intact for me!

MORNING AND AN AMERICAN BREAKFAST TO
TOP IT OFF

When morning comes the gold-fish bowl is changed
And books put back that evening disarranged.

Dust that the afternoon had settled down
Back in the air by the dusting-cloth is thrown.

The blinds are opened that the twilight shut,
Each chair and cushion in its place is put.

Windows are lifted and new air flows in
And the old air goes outdoors to stay again.

And so the day begins with cereal, coffee,
Fruit and cream and bran and orange juice.

The papers tell what you and I deduce
Of murder, arson, pillage, rape, suttee.

And down the street invested warm and fair
Jauntily stalks the morning debonair.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT, THIS TIME FROM
STATION WZQX

With a rich, generous voice he replied
(His voice was a roof, it rained in the world outside)

Speaking words to salve the wounded ego
From the sermon on the mountain long ago

Thus contrived to pass the Sunday afternoon
By grace of rain outside and hearing the tune

Of water on eaves, in gutters, while inside
To every question of the world a voice replied

Over wireless in this complicated age
The voice declares again against the wage

Of death for sin, a voice rich, generous
As a thick-roofed house when weather is tempestuous

Outside in the world—such a different circumstance
From when it was uttered on the mount by chance.

PERFIDIOUS ALBION

Perfidious Albion that dares to dream
Upon chalk cliffs and warmed by the Gulf Stream
As if secure,

White Island, hated since
Your minds aborted destinies of France;

The processes of age are on you now
And on your marble ivy will soon grow
With moss;

no crowds will trample down your streets;
The cenotaph is all that you salute;
Albion,

the hand upon your lute
Is grown rheumatic,

no more silver chords
Will fall and sparkle in among the words
Golden vibrant that your king might say
Whose throne may shake or tumble any day,
Perfidious Albion with your sea-etched shore!

by Robert E. Spiller

THE TASK OF THE HISTORIAN OF AMERICAN LITERATURE

EVER since Professor Pattee issued his classic "Call for a Literary Historian" in *The American Mercury* for June, 1924, there has been a feverish activity on the part of students of our literary past. So detailed and miscellaneous has been the character of their findings and so sweeping their generalizations that the time may perhaps have come for something approaching an inventory of accomplishment and a new charting of the course toward a goal which has not yet been reached.

In order to isolate the problem fairly and clearly, it is necessary to distinguish literary history from its inevitable and close associates, literary criticism and the history of civilization as a whole. Literary history conceives of literature as one aspect of organic evolution, limited by time and space for the purpose of study, and determined by forces and factors both within and without the individual and collective experience of the writers who lived in that time and place. Its primary concern is with relations rather than with absolute values, but it is dependent on criticism for appraisal of these values, and on other forms of history for the analysis of its causes. The result is that the literary historian is often a critic or a social or economic historian as well, and it is right that he should be. No student can confine himself wholly to one idiom of thought or to one field of investigation because, in the final analysis, no human knowledge can be isolated; but it is important that he recognize his peculiar province and devote his major attention to it, relying, when he can, on the work of others for related knowledge.

The province of the literary historian is therefore limited to the forms and movements in literature in time and place and in the literary developments of individual writers. His fields of study are

further restricted by race, nation, and period. The race with which we have to deal in American literary history is a composite of the Aryan races of Europe, with some admixture of the Indian, the Negro, the Mongol, and other strains. It was primarily Anglo-Saxon in its origins, but no longer is even thus far limited. The nation with which we have to deal is one which came into existence only a century and a half ago, but which has since gained a strong sense of organic and cultural unity. Our period is primarily the later eighteenth century, all of the nineteenth, and a part of the twentieth. We must depend upon the ethnologist and the anthropologist for the detailed examination of the racial factors in our study, upon the historian of economic, political and social forces for the examination of other than literary factors in our national unity, and upon historians of other forms of culture for related studies of the aesthetic life of our people.

The work of our early literary historians was deficient in correlative knowledge. When Samuel Knapp first attempted a chronological treatment of our literature in 1829, he was handicapped by a complete ignorance of background understanding of American civilization. The result was that he related American literature to English civilization and literature because it happened to be written for the most part in the English language. In so far as he succeeded in an examination of the work of our early writers in terms of its native causes, his comment was miscellaneous and unsynthesized. His successors, Griswold, Richardson, Allibone, Duyckinck, Stedman, and Tyler, attained to a greater degree of synthesis in terms of organic evolution, but for the most part they merely pushed his unrelated analyses further and confined themselves to fact-finding. The fundamental fallacy that American is merely a department of English literary history persisted almost to our own day. We were not freed from this handicap until social historians like Merriman, Turner, and Fox, philosophical historians like Riley and Schneider, and economic historians like Beard made a fresh study of our civilization in these related terms. When the illogical and now almost obsolete *Cambridge History of American Literature* appeared in 1917, the work of the new historians was still in its comparative infancy, and that ambitious task, still laboring under the fallacious principles of the old order, was

only partially enlightened by anticipatory flashes of insight into the new.

It was obvious that the American literary historian had a gigantic task ahead of him, a task which he has undertaken with great zest, but which is still far from completion. He must turn for the moment from his primary concern, the study of the evolution of our literature in its own terms, to a study of the bearing which the new findings and opinions of workers in related fields have upon his problem. The epoch-making work of this transition period is of course Parrington's *Main Currents in American Thought*, a survey which I believe was originally undertaken as a literary history, but which developed into an examination primarily of the Jeffersonian theory of democracy, in its application to our agrarian and industrial development, and in its expression in our writings. This is not literary history, but it was a prerequisite to the new literary history, and only a literary historian could do it successfully.

The fact-finders and the interpreters of the new order had already set to work, the former more successfully than the latter. Rusk's *Literature of the Middle Western Frontier* anticipated Parrington by two years and Jones's *America and French Culture* came in the same year as the *Main Currents*. Literally thousands of similar studies of more narrowly limited problems were undertaken, many of which have since been published. Gradually we are accumulating the materials for the interpretation of our literary history in these new terms, but an appalling amount of work still needs to be done. This work is not strictly literary history, but it must be done by students of literature. The transition period in our scholarship is not yet at an end. Attempts at synthesis like Lucy Lockwood Hazard's *The Frontier in American Literature* and the school histories which have appeared in the last few years fail of conviction because they are too much handicapped by the old idiom of thought or because they rush ill-advisedly to conclusions which are confused and unsound. Foerster's *The Reinterpretation of American Literature* has charted the course by essay and bibliography; Boynton's *The Rediscovery of the Frontier* approaches a realization of the ideal; and Constance

Rourke's *American Humor* is more comprehensive and significant than its limiting title would imply.

I.

The problems for the student of American literature's relationship to American civilization are two. First, he must relate our writings to our national origins and development in philosophical, economic, social, political, and cultural terms; and second, he must study in greater detail the influence which the traditional cultures of Europe have exerted upon the American literary mind.

The studies of the Puritan, and of the frontier in the middle nineteenth century, are nearing a satisfactory degree of completion; but those of the earliest frontier, the settlement of the original colonies, are still unrelated to literary history. The racial and religious factors in our origins, to which James Truslow Adams gives so much attention in his *Epic of America*, the Quaker and other elements on the Middle Atlantic seaboard, the civilization of the Indians, both Northern and Southern, and of the Spanish and French settlers, are only a few of the problems which concern the earliest period in our history and which have not yet been related in a satisfactory manner to literary history, although much work has recently been done upon them by other kinds of historians. In the period of the awakening literary consciousness immediately before and after the Revolutionary War, there is need of a similar study of the life of the Atlantic seaboard cities and of the factors in American life which produced, between 1820 and 1840, an aggressive sense of cultural autonomy, with its resultant literary experiments. Our study of the period before the Civil War has been too strictly limited to New England, and too little attention has been paid to the sense of national insecurity which caused the collapse of the Federalist party, and to the religious liberalism which gave rise not only to Unitarianism, to the extension of the Evangelical movement in the South, and to other forms of "heresy" outside the Congregational fold. We have failed also to understand fully that the first steps in the middle western frontier movement were undermining the supports of Concord and Cambridge security long before Hawthorne, Melville, and Emerson began to write. Even the later stages of the frontier need

further analysis in literary terms before we can see the Gilded Age as something other than an enemy to culture; the social revolt from the evils of unlimited immigration, of industrialism, and of the agrarian movement of the late nineteenth century is similarly misunderstood in its bearing upon our literature; and the social and economic factors immediately before and after the last war have connections with our contemporary writings which are only appreciated in the vaguest terms. There is much still to be done before American literary history can be related closely and accurately to the kaleidoscope of American civilization, and before our historians can discover more exact terms than "Convention, Revolt, and General Chaos" to describe the recent past.

The other aspect of the same problem, the cultural links with Europe, has received slightly more attention, but here likewise there is room for further study. Faust's *The German Element in the United States*, Jones' *America and French Culture*, Ward's *The Dutch and Swedes on the Delaware* and other similar works indicate but do not develop fully the influences of these racial strains on our literature; and the part played by the Spanish in our early history, or by the Irish, Italian, Polish, Norwegian, Bohemian, and other later immigrant groups, are only partially understood. The writings of travelers to and from America have been examined for themselves, but their bearing upon our literature deserves further comment. The influence of imported books, too, is being gradually appreciated. The catalogues of the Library Company of Philadelphia and other such organizations, as well as of the early booksellers, need closer study as a contribution toward an understanding of the relationship of 18th century English literature to our first literary experiments, and the appreciation of the significance of an Oriental library in Concord as a determining factor in the thought of Emerson and Thoreau is only one of many such factors which are now beginning to be appreciated. Cairns opened an entirely new field in his studies of the British criticisms of American writings, but we lack such comprehensive reviews of French, German, Italian, and other foreign periodicals, and even the work of Cairns is little more than a survey of possibilities. Foreign influences on American periodicals have come in for similar survey treatments in recent times, but even here there is

room for more detailed study than has yet been made, although many such projects are in progress now, as the articles in such periodicals as *American Literature*, and doctoral theses recently announced or published, bear witness.

II.

Much of this form of study is now concentrating its efforts upon the growth of the literary minds of our major writers. Franklin, Thoreau, Howells, and many others have given us first-hand evidence of the direct influence of their travels and reading upon their work, but for the undoubted influence of Balzac and Scott on Cooper, and other such problems in the literary growth of men who were not diary-minded, we must set ourselves to much analytical study of internal evidence and much hypothesis. Here, too, there is work to be done before the gaps in the background of our literary history are filled.

There are two sides to the problem of the relation of such background studies to the study of literary history. Not only did the peculiar Anglo-Dutch aristocratic heritage of New York society shape the lives and thought of the Knickerbocker group, but it becomes the subject of Irving's *Knickerbocker's History*, Paulding's *A Dutchman's Fireside*, Cooper's *Home as Found* and *Satanstoe*, and Halleck's *Fanny*. The Mississippi is not only an economic factor in Mark Twain's biography, but it is an epic theme in *Huck Finn* and *Life on the Mississippi*. The decline of New England acted as a check on the aesthetic maturity of Hawthorne and Melville and as a theme for novels from *The House of the Seven Gables* to *Deep Haven*. We must understand all of these elements in our civilization both as casual factors in the lives of American authors and as materials of American literature. Until we appreciate their significance from both points of view, the preparation of our materials and our concepts for the writing of the new American literary history will not be completed.

Except that there are now many workers to undertake these tasks, it is a pity that there is still so much to be done. Ours is perhaps the only field of endeavor today in which there is no danger of unemployment. But these background analyses have their bad side, in that they divert attention from the problems

more properly the prerogative of the American literary historian. In cases where other historians like Riley, Faust, Beard, and Turner have done much to clear the ground and to establish facts and factors, we may concentrate on our task of applying their discoveries to literary history, but where they have not, we must swerve temporarily from our main course. In the few cases in which even the application has been made with a reasonable degree of thoroughness, we may proceed to our special task of charting literary history in terms of forms and movements, thereby shifting our emphasis from the grounds of the philosophical, social, political, and economic historian over toward that of the literary critic, and finding our rightful places as literary historians.

Perhaps the most significant single contribution to this aspect of our thought was the clear definition of a romantic movement in our literature by Foerster in his anthologies and in his study of our naturalists and critics. His pioneer work has been carried on by Clark and others to a point at which we can now distinguish a native romantic movement as clearly as we can that of a similar movement in England, Germany, or France. Now that we recognize the Concord and Cambridge renaissance of 1830-1850 as an autonomous literary movement, motivated by aspirations and experimentations common to romanticism in all times and places, and determined in ideas and forms by the circumstances of the American background, we may adjust our values so that Melville can take his place above Alcott; Thoreau may be appreciated as something more than a rough diamond; Hawthorne may be accepted for the artist that he is rather than as a mere by-product of Puritan repressions; and the imitative and occasional work of Longfellow and Lowell may be distinguished from that which reveals flashes of true poetic insight.

Once this pole of the movement is established, we discover that Cooper, Irving, Bryant and the other Knickerbockers are explicitly related to the New England group, not because they were transcendentalists in embryo, which of course they were not, but because they were romanticists of a more elementary and imitative kind than their Northern successors. The significance of local groups is lessened as an understanding of the organic growth

of the movement establishes broader, and more specifically literary, relationships between the work of writers in the different seaboard cities. Similarly, Poe ceases to be a sport, unaccountable in terms of his background, and makes his very significant contribution to our story by bringing the Gothic element, already apparent in the work of Brockden Brown, to the level of aesthetic maturity; and Freneau appears less important as "the poet of the Revolution", taking his place as the first American romantic poet of genius.

But we still continue merrily to divide our history by wars and presidential campaigns, and we fail to draw these flashes of true aesthetic insight into a unified whole. As we move backward and forward from the pole which we have established in the Concord group, our thought becomes more and more cloudy and confused. The significance of the Knickerbocker group in its relationship to the movement is only beginning to be recognized, and that of the Philadelphia and Princeton groups, Brown, Hopkinson, Freneau, Breckenridge, Godfrey, and Royall Tyler, is scarcely noted. The importance of the Revolutionary War as a political phenomenon hovers over this early period as an undisputed tyrant. Writers of literary history must make their obeisance to it and are commanded to treat their subjects, not as groups of men with sincere literary aspirations, but as agents for the expression of patriotic or unpatriotic ideas. The result is that we have failed to attempt an analysis of the types of imitative romanticism which gave shape to the period as an epoch in American literary history. The Gothic, the historical, and the sentimental interests were all present, and were all closely related to parallel interests in Europe. And we have also failed to distinguish imitative neoclassicism from imitative romanticism. English literary history of a century was telescoped in America to a quarter of that time.

Neither have the types of imitative romanticism been distinguished from the native factors which made the later romanticism more truly American. The patriotism of the period is important to us here, not because it won a war and gave us a constitution, but because it gave Americans a sense of cultural autonomy—or rather, a sense of the need for one, which in effect is the same thing. The dozen or more essays on the need for a national

literature which preceded Emerson's *American Scholar* and which expressed practically all of the leading ideas in that classic essay, have never been brought together and given a place in our national literary history as one of the primary causes of the romantic movement.

Similarly, the independence of mind and the demand for a liberty of conscience which dates back to Roger Williams, Thomas Morton, and William Penn, which developed in the conviction of John Wise and in the inner struggles of Jonathan Edwards, and which matured in the deism of Franklin and Paine, continue to be regarded as aspects of religious and political rather than of literary history. This movement too has a direct bearing on later romanticism in America by developing the speculative habit of mind, but even our most radical of contemporary historians, Ludwig Lewisohn, proceeds on the theory that Calvinism has been merely a destructive force in our literary development until the very recent past. Transcendentalism, a by-product of Calvinism, is more important to literature than to philosophy because it gave us Emerson and Whitman.

A third factor in the growth of the movement, the interest in science and nature, is closely related to the other two and was early apparent in the natural history essay and in the choice of native scenes for poetry and novels. The Bartrams, Crèvecoeur, Wilson, and Audubon are slighted in even our most recent histories.

Again, the imitative neo-classicism which appeared in America simultaneously with the earlier evidences of romanticism, has been recognized in the Hartford Wits, but even here perhaps the emphasis has been too strong on its political and religious rather than on its literary bearings, and its significance has not been tied in closely enough with its aesthetic companion and opposite, imitative romanticism.

III.

These are only a few of the problems in the determination of forms and movements in early American literature, and I have been able to do no more than hint at their scope. I might attempt a similar analysis of the problems of realism and the

romance of local color, not only in their social relationships to sectionalism and the back-trailer movement, but, following in the lead of Pattee, Garland, and others, I might point out the many half-solved problems which are attendant upon the definition of a realistic movement in the American novel after about 1870 and a naturalistic movement in American poetry and the novel of the recent past. This would follow the reappraisal of Whitman and Mark Twain in their relationships to both movements, and would open the question of the proper place in our literary history of James, Adams, Dreiser, and many others. Even Upton Sinclair must have an aesthetic as well as a sociological significance if he is to occupy the place in our literary history which the emotional power of *The Jungle* seems to demand for him.

I think, however, that I have indicated enough specific problems to establish my thesis that the new race of American literary historians, who must be philosophers and economists as well as critics, have still much work ahead. They must perfect our knowledge of correlated backgrounds where they lack the aid of historians in other fields; they must concentrate on the problem of the specific applications of this knowledge to literary history proper; and then, turning to their rightful province, they must continue from the bare start which has been made in the definitions of the romantic and realistic movements to a complete charting of our literary history in similar terms. Further, they must do for American poetry, the essay, and the novel what has been done by Quinn for the American drama and, to a lesser extent, by Pattee and others, for the American short story. Until we have complete and detailed histories of the development of these five literary forms in America, no satisfactory history of our literature can be written.

It is evident that our first task as research investigators is not, at the present time, the writing of this new history, but the conservation and classification of the sources from which it is to be written, and the continued and intensive fact-finding in limited fields and on specific problems, upon which we have all been engaged. We must be patient.

by Arthur E. DuBois

EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY

But wit, abstracted from its effect upon the hearer may be rigorously and philosophically considered as a kind of discordia concors, a combination of dissimilar images, or discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike.—DR. JOHNSON.

WINE FROM THESE GRAPES' takes its title from *The Buck in the Snow*. And in it Miss Millay reminiscences a bit, writes a good many epitaphs, dallies a while with the seasons, often takes her art rather casually, re-tracks some old trails, and at times gets somewhat disgusted with herself, not going forward, not seeing more. But she is none the less among the most competent of modern poets. Her sonnets still click with the best in the language. She is still able to deal Death an upper-cut with her left while she is leading out with her right to a solar plexus at Life. She has not given up. She is still herself.

Childhood is not from birth to a certain age and at a certain age
The child is grown, and puts away childish things.
Childhood is the kingdom where nobody dies.

Criticism has spent many a word on Edna St. Vincent Millay, and still bought little. It has fallen down and worshipped an exquisite sonneteer, recognizing her as such long before she published *The Fatal Interview*. But if criticism only worships, it merely falls down. In the finely chiselled, cameo-like *Aria da Capo* criticism has seen fancy fashioned by irony into the likeness of a sonnet, enlarged to be the monument of moody years and years, not merely the monument of a moment or the sequential "Epitaph for the Race of Man". Criticism lost itself in wonder at the precocity of *Renascence* and needed to find itself again. It has contented itself with defining peculiar tricks of style or with detailing items of biography or with trying to bind Edna to her time or generation.

¹Harper & Brothers. New York: 1934.

But if criticism can go no further, it may as well hold its tongue. It fails in all its functionings if it can say of Miss Millay finally only that she is precocious, a woman, a poet, and perhaps a mystic. Without the help of a critic, anyone who reads *Renasce* will know its author for a precocious child, woman, poet, and perhaps mystic. Yet to know her thus is to know three or four personalities and no single person. Somehow Miss Millay has been like an object of heart's desire to criticism: when it thought it had her fastest it has lost her most completely.

The mystery is not at all simplified by the fact that Miss Millay herself, and the lovers of her poems, suffer knowingly under a similar inability to hold fast, like Donne extremely conscious of the mutability of time, place, and person. There is always a place for a new lover, a regret for a past lover, a consequent apparent mutation of personality or multiplication of personalities, and a final sense of having missed the real Edna St. Vincent Millay, who is nevertheless center of the mystery and therefore localizable.

Nor is the mystery a bit simplified again by Miss Millay's evident feeling that she is not a compound of split personalities. She is not a disjointed child, woman, poet, and mystic but recognizably herself, and

being like my mother the brown earth
Fervent and full of gifts and free from guile,
Liefer would I you loved me for my worth,
Though you should love me but a little while,
Than for a philtre any doll can brew—
Though thus I bound you as I long to do.

In fact, one soon begins to see that Miss Millay's insistence upon keeping her own identity inviolate is perhaps the commonest theme in her poems. Only this identity remains incorruptible, a room sacred against Bluebeard. In *Renasce* it is personal identity which prevents infinity from closing in completely. It is loss of this identity which makes death perpetually dreadful, "Beauty stiffened, staring up at the sky, Oh, Autumn! Autumn!—what's the Spring to me?"

Down, down, down into the darkness of the grave
Gently they go, the beautiful, the tender, the kind;
Quietly they go, the intelligent, the witty, the brave.
I know. But I do not approve. And I am not resigned.

Only if Miss Millay could have

Two things in one
The peace of the grave
And the light of the sun

—only if Miss Millay could still be herself in death would she be reconciled to it. But

Death, however,
Is a spongy wall,
Is a sticky river,
Is nothing at all.

In "Rosemary" and many another poem, it is gasping for a continuance of her own identity which makes Miss Millay plead to be read after death. The woman and the precocious child are one with the poet, and if the poet does not die the woman can not. Even in the sonnets finally, it is continuity of personal identity which alike resists and permits the going and coming of lovers.

II.

If an insistence upon keeping her own identity is the underlying theme of Miss Millay's poetry, and if as she says this personality is preserved in her poetry so that death will not matter if she is read after death, then it behooves the critic to try to find the common denominator beneath the three or four numerators: precocious child, authentic poet, woman, and mystic. If Miss Millay's own identity is of paramount importance, moreover, whatever nearly deprives her of it is hardly of secondary importance: death, infinity, oblivion, or any of their symbols like the ocean, spreading meadows, the grave, or autumn. One is a reverse-facet of the other.

The discovery of this identity will be a witticism, a detection of occult resemblance between things apparently unlike, between the four numerators. This conceit will not be verbal merely but because it gets beyond common realities for which there are well-known words often it will seem only verbal. It will be elusive. For occult resemblances between unlike things are never complete. An epigram, for example, is like a needle because at their best both are sharply pointed, but otherwise there is no connection

between them and if one tries to pursue the connection one breaks the thread of one's definition of either an epigram or a needle.

Miss Millay's identity, then, will be a conceit, a witticism. It will also be a paradox. For at last Miss Millay is a wit. Genius might be defined exactly in terms of its capacity to detect new occult resemblances between things apparently unlike. And Miss Millay refines wit to its ultimate sharpness, to its vanishing point, paradox, where figs grow from thistles and a thousand saints dance where there is actually room for not even one.

The trail, in brief, leads through secret relationships between precocious child, pure poet, woman, and mystic. Its goal is the discovery of the paradox which is *Millay* and which makes organic the paradoxes she defines. Along the way, notes will often be so high in scale as to be practically inaudible: finity wrested from infinity, time touched by eternity, mortality immortalized, sanity so acute as to be insane. Miss Millay found herself on the outside edge, and there she is to be found.

III.

Miss Millay was a precocious child, and the fact is of final importance. The precocious child is unusually conscious of being a child because it is actually not a child by right of its precocity. In consequence, it is unusually retentive of its identity, menaced by children and adults alike, to neither of whom it belongs, and it establishes new identities. Old before its time and feeling at home in the world of neither the young nor the old, it has a hard time to keep from being obliterated. It becomes the center of a world of its own, in which it has a necessary part and in which its identity is therefore cherished. To create this world, the precocious child has to turn wit, to find strange resemblances between incongruous things in the worlds it is no part of. It is a Christopher Robin, neither upstairs nor down. It sees both upstairs and down, makes a connection between them, bringing both together in a midway world of its own.

Miss Millay belongs to this midway world. She is still the precocious child because identity lasts. And accordingly from the first the child was a mystic, poet, and woman; the woman was a

mystic and a poet; and the poet was a mystic. The child was never old or young. The woman was never typical or eccentric but both. The poet was never timely or timeless, but both. And the mystic was never finite or infinite. Miss Millay, summarily, is neither mortal nor immortal, but both. This is the conceit *Millayhood*.

IV.

Precocity is self-centered, ego-centric. It feeds upon itself and is therefore apt to wear itself out. All his life Wordsworth regretted losses of mystical intuition enjoyed as a child, and so at times did Coleridge, Shelley, or Browning. Whether because it establishes habits for good which are tolerable only in children, whether because it expands the ego until it clouds the sun, or whether because by being self-consuming it produces an anaemia—whatever the reason, John Howard Payne, Master Betty, Jackie Coogan, and many another precocious youth are warnings posted against precocity along the past of the past. The precocious run the risk of being merely precious, of clinging always to childhood toys, and of establishing nursery *zeitgeists* like the Victorian. On the other hand, precocity may produce the pure poet, Chatterton or Keats, or the mystic like Blake or the "lilte clergeon" of Chaucer's "Prioress's Tale."

Precocity makes the child remarkable. It makes him odd or it makes him old. It makes the girl a woman. Setting one apart thus from the rest of the world, it emphasizes the importance of having individuality, increasing one's secret egoism or egotism. This oddness is not so much self-sought as it is thrust upon one. In the "Humoresque",

"Heaven bless the babe!" they said.
"What queer books she must have read!"
(Love, by whom I was beguiled,
Grant I may not bear a child.)

The ultimate consequence of such precocity may be a childless woman or an heirless man because, having become part of oneself, one's unusualness and one's sensitiveness about it continue beyond childhood. The consequence may be a spoiled child, a child upon whom much has been lavished, who has grown to ex-

pect this luxury as a right belonging to her existence as an unusual being, and who, when she grows up and misses what she has come to expect, is perpetually wilful, disappointed, on the look-out for Santa Claus to drop down crumbled chimneys. Miss Millay has not been unaffected in this manner.

Or the consequence of precocity may be the unusual learning of John Stuart Mill or the unusual artfulness of Chatterton. If it is not recognized too soon and spoiled it may produce unusual activity on the part of the little genius to achieve a place in the world by unusual learning, technical skill, or intuitive understanding or vision.

In any case, the child is often naturally a mystic or a pure poet. Children are frequently brats of course, and their trailing clouds of glory are frequently black and thunderous. They are never actually wise. But children, like madmen and women, are wont to have flashes of insight which take one's breath away. These flashes are not reasonable or sensible, for the child is too inexperienced to know how either to keep his head or be in his senses. In short, they are a kind of madness, associable with mystic experiences, passing the comprehension of men who have not been similarly transported out of their wits like Wordsworth as a child, William Beebe thrown suddenly back into the childhood of nature, the jungle at night, or Shelley as an inspired poet, and

Who shall say if Shelley's gold
Had withstood it to grow old?

Near to madness, at times the child is not only an incipient genius but also a mystic.

Precocity but strengthens this tendency in children toward the mystic and a consequent sense of unity, for example, with the dark. For precocity itself is a kind of madness:

There was a child that wandered through
A giant's house all day,—
House full of wonderful things and new,
But no fit place for a child to play.

This child, Miss Millay, was taken once on a "Visit to the Asylum." And it is not strange that the inmates patted her on the head, cut flowers for her, and gave her pretty cakes to eat:

There were a thousand windows,
All latticed up and down.
And up to all the windows,
When I went back to town,

The queer folk put their faces,
As gentle as could be;
"Come again, little girl!" they called, and I
Call back, "You come see me!"

Madness has been preternaturally wise so often as to become a tradition in folklore. Madmen, fools, and children speak with the tongues of angels. And psychologists are as nearly agreed as they are to anything, that precocity is genius, the sanest borderline to insanity. It is closeness to the outside edge of the mystic.

The conceit which is *Millayhood* begins to take form. There are recognizable occult connections between child and mystic whereby one could be both. The child may be also naturally a poet: childhood is the natural age of poetry.

For poetry is imagistic, picturesque, symbolic. And the child delights in images, pictures, and symbols. Poetry translates abstractions into realities, clothes bare ideas in the colorful vices of their time, patterns white radiances through many-colored domes. The language of age is the language of abstraction. It is essential and quintessential. The literature of age is prose, a literature of knowledge. But the language of youth is concrete, rainbowery, and its literature is poetry, a literature of power.

The child is not less fluent in abstraction because he delights in realities. In a big way he goes in for liberty, fraternity, truth, and beauty, but he does so partly to the extent only that he can illustrate them with the enslaved, the unequal, the false, and the ugly or their opposites. And old age is not less aware of realities necessarily because he abstracts them. The youth is diffuse, rather, and delights in the colored rinds of truth as well as its seedy core. The field of his experience is limited, and his abstractions and realities coalesce. Or else he is a wit, and perceives quickly new relationships between the abstract and the concrete, with emphasis on the latter. The field of the old man's experience is expanded; realities have become either confusing or superficial; in any case, he must condense. And he is apt to distrust wit, which detects resemblances which are usually only partial, not complete.

For youth, being loved is having a colored candy. Being good besides is having two colored candies. Love and goodness are abstract, are knowledge, are life. Having one or two colored candies is concrete, is power, is poetry. Few people ever grow old enough to read pure prose. Perhaps philosophers and statisticians come nearest, and Euclid alone has looked on Beauty bare. The age of poetry is the age of youth. And to read poetry, the old man must develop a degree of precocity which he may never have discovered in himself as a youngster. Though perhaps he was never mature when he was young, to read poetry he must remain young when he is old.

Not only does youth delight in realities which are the language of poetry. Children are relatively uninhibited. In fact, education is often the imposition of inhibitions upon them, particularly in small schools and narrow families. Yet the artist must be free—he cannot afford to be awkward and self-conscious. A free hand in drawing, a free brush in painting, or a free pen in writing is essential. One must be able to give one's self up to the moment.

The genius transcends his fellows almost in proportion to his ability to forget himself as one of them and to free himself from their prejudices and superstitions, their taboos and dogmas, their routines and moralities and amoralities and platitudes. This freedom is a condition to originality, a reason for genius, which sees ahead of its time. Things taken for granted are often the vices of a time, its local coloring. And to the extent that he can forget them or get beyond them, the child is a pure poet in little. Relatively free from inhibition, liberated to trespass beyond even sound and sense, the pure poet is selfless. He is cosmopolitan, not provincial, not upstairs, not downstairs. The child is selfless too. Today he can be the Pirate of Silver Cove, and tomorrow Captain Halibun the cutter sleuth, Black Eagle the Indian brave, Dick Dare the Revolutionary War spy, Dick Merriwell the double-curve twirler, or Paddy the Plucky.

The child, then, delights in realities and is relatively free from inhibitions and is therefore often a natural poet. Precocity but emphasizes these predispositions toward pure lyricism in him. Meanwhile, if we check back, we are faced with apparent paradoxes. Being unusual, the precocious child is unusually retentive

of his own identity, an egoist subject to moods of self-exaltation or self-pity. Yet being uninhibited, he is also relatively selfless, and capable of epic or dramatic moods. Again, the incipient poet, the child delights in realities. Yet he seems to free himself from the largest set of realities he can know, the vices of his time or its local coloring.

These paradoxes are part of a larger one. Realities are the language of pure poetry, but pure poetry is precisely not occasional, polemical, local, or timely. We look at two facets of a single diamond. Unusually self-conscious, egoistic, retentive of its own identity, scarcely fitting into the company of people of its own age or older in years, the precocious child is forced into a world of its own, remote from time or place, where it creates, recreates, or otherwise brings together its own sets of realities, a candy world.

My heart, being hungry, feeds on food
The fat of heart despise.
Beauty where no beauty stood,
And sweet where no sweet lies
I gather to my querulous need,
Having a growing heart to feed.

Likely to become symbols and to take the child in the direction of symbolism or mysticism, these new realities displace the vices of an age and serve as a basis even of criticism of them. And just as the optimist on one plane of thought or experience is most pessimistic on another, so the precocious child, unusually retentive of his own individuality, building up a world to preserve it in, nevertheless projects himself selflessly into that world where want of inhibition enables him finally to say that he is significant in a scheme of things, to indulge egoism, and to write of self at last without awkwardness. Selflessly centering his own world of reality and ideality, the sun about which it revolves, the child becomes a microcosmos, a pure poet, given particularly to lyrical moods. His world is *I*, but his *I*, is also *you*, the child whose identity is not menaced by adults or children.

Miss Millay's precocity, then, is of elemental importance. There is an occult relationship between the precocious child and the mystic or the pure poet. And of course, being old beforehand, the precocious child is an adult, the girl a woman, in spite of the fact that there may still be the "Anguish" of growing-pains:

I would to God that I were quenched and fed
As in my youth
From the flask of song, and the good bread
Of beauty richer than truth.
The anguish of the world is on my tongue.
My bowl is filled to the brim with it; there is more than I can eat
Happy are the toothless old and toothless young
That cannot rend this meat.

The precocious child, in brief, has her nose flattened against the window-pane. She remains precocious, neither of this world nor that. She looks outward or inward upon the world of adult or youngster, belonging to neither, wishful in both, projecting herself into both and evolving thence a new world in which are peculiar realities inseparable from her own personality and in which that personality is tenderly preserved. Lonely, she is unusually retentive of herself, child and woman. Lonely, she is also creative to escape loneliness, mystic and poet. Viewing the world from a distance and drawing parts of it to her or projecting herself outward into it, she makes her world part of her identity. It and she go to pieces together; both last while one lasts; and while either lasts the child is mystic, poet, and woman because that unity is the word separating the waters of that world, its alpha and omega, its sun.

V.

Hardly any other writer makes one more conscious than Miss Millay that she is a woman. The reasons are many and immaterial. Other women are feminine rather than womanly—I mean they are somewhat artificial, affected, de-sexed—not because they always try to write like men but because they still write like neither men nor women. Miss Millay is feminine too. She can be artificial. And she uses dashes (—'s) as only feminine writers of either sex do, stream-of-consciencelessly. When they are driven to the point of being actually male or female, men and women alike put periods, not dashes, to their sententiousness. But like witty or beautiful women, moreover, Miss Millay's poetry makes men want to show off and exhibits them, by contrast, at their worst. It is womanly in other respects too. Finally it is the poetry of the pursued rather than of the pursuer.

Generalizations about differences between men and women

mean very little, not only because any single woman or man may prove exceptional and not only because, as Meredith has said, civilization tends to minimize the importance of those differences outside the bedroom or maternity hospital, but also because these differences are precisely both biologic and circumstantial. Men who know least about women know most about woman, and men who know most about women know least about woman. And any man who talks about HER, therefore, makes a fool of himself in any case.

It is true, nevertheless, that more than a man the woman is apt for poetry and mystic experiences. The conditions of her upbringing, for example, still parallel the conditions surrounding precocity more nearly than the conditions under which a man grows up. Like the precocious child, hence, the woman is apt to live preciously in a world of her own, with its own peculiar realities and idealities, its joys born of pain. The woman, therefore, is more apt for symbolism than the man. And again, though she may be more generous, more selfless, in giving herself, she is still more retentive than a man of her own inner identity because more things conspire with men to steal it from her. Maintaining her unique personality, therefore, is more abstruse and mystical than man's maintaining his. She herself, consequently, becomes easily a symbol to the man, of life and love, of beauty and truth, the sun of the universe, the queen bee of the hive. She is *woman* oftener than men are *man* and not merely men.

A woman is receptive, expectant, passive, defensive. Besides a woman, a man is a relatively simple animal. All his energies are outward bound, active and offensive, apt to carve for himself a niche in the rock of ages. But a woman's natural energies are somewhat active inward, so that, on the one hand, her personal identity is more necessary to her than a man's to him and, on the other hand, it is also harder to locate. A man can find himself in a job, an ideal, or a woman. But a woman has somehow generally to find herself in herself or in the child in her. A man overcomes obstacles by pushing them aside or by crushing them into unimportant pieces. A woman overcomes obstacles by cherishing them, growing big with them. Her identity is the oyster's pearl. Man's is the beaver's dam. Infinity, nothing, presses much more

intimately about the woman than about the man. And embracing it, rather than trying to shatter it, she comprehends it much more wholly, resists it much more effectually, and accepts it much more gracefully than a man. Beside a man, a woman is born mystic.

Donne is always a man. Shelley is most womanly and most childlike, most romantic, mystical, and purely poetical when he is most passive, wishing to be a lyre to the West Wind.

And just as she is more naturally apt to be a mystic than a man is, so the woman is fitter to be the pure poet, to deal with life and death and love between them rather than with occasional externalities, war today, inflation tomorrow, and deflation the next day. She is apt to paint in the nude. To be a woman is to be loved and bear children. Miss Millay is the poetess of love, and she is her own child. As a woman she still finds her identity on the outside edge, conscious of being finite because the infinite is so nearly external as practically to be internal. And there her themes are precocious art themes, life and death and love between them, themes women deal with more directly than men.

The paradox is no more real, and no less apparent, than paradoxes already noted. Just as the child is more concerned with realities than is the adult, so the woman is more often concerned than the man with externalities like dress or with details whether they are a matter of deportment, scholarship, taste, morals or anything else with which both are concerned. But just as the precocious child is retentive of identity to the point of depersonalizing self, expanding the ego into a microcosmos, universalizing it until it is hardly personal, and eliminating realities that remain permanently no part of that cosmos, so the woman makes externalities a part of herself. Dress ceases to matter when it is no longer an item in self-expression, just as precedence ceases to matter to Dolly Gann when it is no longer part of her official identity.

Accordingly, woman gets used to doing without realities that are not definitely part of her. Love comes and goes throughout Miss Millay's poetry with lovers, like infinity itself perpetual, like waves on a symbolic ocean recurrent. Only her own identity remains inviolate, an inner sanctum sanctorum, outside of which the

going and coming of men, war and rumors of war, and other occasional, unimportant things do not matter. When one love dies, in the "Interim,"

Ah, I am worn out—I am wearied out—
It is too much—I am but flesh and blood,
And I must sleep. Though you were dead again,
I am flesh and blood, and I must sleep.

Unusually self-conscious, unusually retentive of its own name and fame on the outside edge, and therefore unusually tender toward the identity of weeds or children or other precocious things whose identities are menaced, the precocious child who fed on "food the fat of heart despise"—mothered by the woman, this child begins to mother the world, life and death and love between them. "World, world, I cannot get thee close enough!"

Not in this chamber only at my birth—
When the long hours of that mysterious night
Were over and the morning was in sight—
I cried, but in strange places, steppes and firth
I have not seen, through alien grief and mirth:
And never shall one room contain me quite
Who in so many rooms first saw the light,
Child of all mothers, native of the earth.

The woman begins to identify herself with all finite things, resisting and knowing infinity. If she dies, hence, the world itself must burn to cinders and heaven be nothing unless she can take to it an identifiable flower become part of her and preserved from the holocaust.

No less than the child, then, the woman is apt for mysticism and pure poetry in a world of her own inseparable from her very existence.

VI.

Discovering occult connections, then, the child can be woman, poet, and mystic, and the woman can be poet and mystic. The conceit which is identity takes form. The pure poet does not write occasional verse, and is therefore more apt to become a mystic than the poet who delights in the local colors of his time and place. Beyond noting that Miss Millay is a pure poet and a mystic, then, one can proceed to seeing how as a mystic she dis-

covers the unity of her beings and then to seeing how this experience becomes objectified and generally meaningful.

Miss Millay is the pure poet. Except in an occasional "Justice Denied in Massachusetts", she pays little attention to the present day. With its "senators and popes and such small fry", the chit-chat of realists is but a filler-in of empty moments between hours spent on the outside edge wresting identity from eternity.

The almost purely artful *King's Henchman* illustrates this indifference, even when it is contrasted with a similarly artful play, Tennyson's *Harold*, which also deals with an early-English period. Writing a trilogy delineating the development of English liberty, in *Harold*, a member of the trilogy, Tennyson does not worry about a loss of identity, but he does worry about losing individuality, the will to do big things by oneself, to be heroic and take pride in one's work, and he finds this individuality threatened, not by universal nothings like death or infinity or love, but by rather specific changes taking place in a rather specific society far from the outside edge. And so, Tennyson worries also about the occasional political and environmental network which meshes the potential hero, Harold. Tennyson's worries over hero-worship were part of the victorian *zeitgeist* and therefore local. And accordingly *Harold* "dates." Everyone now recognizes that there are a thousand architects of everyone's fate: we are more or less reconciled to behaviorisms.

The *King's Henchman*, on the other hand, deals with no problem we think of today peculiarly. It makes no attempt realistically to portray a romantic past or romantically to comment on a real present. It is not occasional. Its colors are purely artful, not local colors. Its theme is the universal art-theme, love and the fateful chances which beset it. Both plays, *Harold* and the *King's Henchman*, are artful. Chance, dreams, portents, chess games, folk-lore customs—these are perennial artifices which Tennyson or Millay may use in one or another of their dramas. But where *Harold* could have been written only in the Victorian era, the *King's Henchman* might have been written by a precocious poet at any time.

Miss Millay's identity and her nearness to the outside edge matter much more than the present and its unimportant details.

To be sure, the *now* is omnipresent. And to be sure, it is perhaps the "dourest, sorest age man's eyes have looked upon":

Dust in urn long since, dispersed and dead
Is great Apollo; and the happier he;
Since who amongst you all would lift a head
At a god's radiance on the mean door-tree,
Saving to run and hide your dates and bread,
And cluck your children in about your knee?

But Donne might have said the same of his own age, might have been the author of "Doubt no more that Oberon," "Interim," or "Sonnet to Gaith" when he wrote in "An Anatomie of the World" that "new philosophie calls all in doubt . . . this world is crumbled out againe to his Atomies . . . For the worlds beauty is decaid, or gone, Beauty, that's colour and proportion." And the author of "Sonnet III" in *The Fatal Interview* might have written Donne's famous compass poem. Both Miss Millay and Donne are metaphysical wits, reaching for moons beyond and catching falling stars, awfully aware that time and place on earth are, and must be, mutable. *The Fatal Interview*, in fact, takes its title from Donne. Man and woman, their having much in common is proof that neither Donne nor Millay is a local poet in any sense. They are therefore pure poets.

Yet to say that Miss Millay's work is not local or timely is not to say merely that the *King's Henchman*, for example, is only precocious art, pretty, pathetic, perennial, and artificial. It may be to say, rather, that there is something perennial in the identity of Miss Millay and that this characteristic gives her work a vitality and consistency which matter more than 1900-1933 or more even than the form, fourteen lines or five acts, which she imposes upon often contradictory moods. Miss Millay's natural themes are therefore precocious, life and death, love and the decay of love which make and unmake identities. If so, and if this identity is inseparable from a universe of its own compacted from one or more universes, if as an entity it has universal aspects which all may appreciate, and if a discovery of this identity is the essence of Miss Millay's poetry, as it is its source, then Miss Millay, the pure poet, is again the mystic, and we who read are in contact with universal congruity, as in mystic experience, when we understand the conceit *Millayhood*.

VII.

Having known Miss Millay as pure poet, precocious child, or woman, one hardly needs to be introduced to her again as a mystic. For it must be obvious by this time that the three are each a mystic in her own right. And it is in a kind of mystic experience that she discovers the singleness of her identity. Each stands on the outside edge, beyond common reality, and touches infinity. By that touch she knows herself from nothing, with each contact with infinity experiences a re-birth, but knows still that child, woman, and poet are one since it is continuity of identity which prevents nothing from closing forever over Edna St. Vincent Millay and since common precocity set woman, child, and poet originally apart from nothing and from commonplaceness on the outside edge. This "renascence" is almost quintessential in mystic experience.

In addition to discovering the singleness of her own personality, on the outside edge Miss Millay also discovers the dependence on it of the whole universe, finds that it is the hub of the wheel, the heart of the cosmic body, the Atlas of the universe. And this discovery is a much subtler one than that implied in the old academic question, if a tree fell down in a forest and none knew it fell, would there be a sound? For it is the mystic's sense of contact with the universe, a part of its harmony; and it originates in the imaginative experience of the child building universes for itself where it will belong.

Yet to call Miss Millay a mystic is to be connotatively unfair to her. For the precocity of the ordinary mystic is commonly self-sought and therefore unnatural, brought about by strange disciplines, whereas Miss Millay was born precocious and, since her identity is continuous, mystical. She needs no special discipline for soaring. "Twixt nothing and everything, her identity is a matter of never having come down to earth. It depends on her keeping her balance on the outside edge, and there, while her world lasts, it remains unchanging and unchanged.

One has, to begin with, an unusual person, a poet, unusually conscious of her own individuality because she is unusual. This identity becomes a kind of hammer to pound the stones of the

outside edge with, to strike sparks for others to see at a safer distance.

In this "valley of stillness" with Masters, this "cave of quietude" with Keats, this kingdom of solitude with Shelley and the Poet and Alastor, "out there" with Donne, neither upstairs nor down—on the outside edge with other free-ranging identities, one is not inhibited. From the impact of identity upon infinity, Millay upon the Rock of Ages, one expects merely sparks, lights that never were on land or sea. Here candles burn at both ends, and give a lovely light. Here sorrow is too cosmic for human weeping, and so one hoards one's tears for little human griefs that do not matter. From this vantage point, one sees that things are seldom what they seem. Shining palaces are built on sand, and figs grow from thistles. One remembers Ozymandias, whom nations have forgotten. One's truest love is false. One is free from care when one's heart breaks. No wine is so wonderful as thirst. Begun in play, life is a game; only, going on forever it becomes deadly serious and people get tired. Dirges put one in good spirits; merry music makes one sad. One looks over the edge so far that one grows dizzy.

O God, I see it now, and my sick brain
Staggers and swoons! How often over me
Flashes this breathlessness of second sight
In which I see the universe unrolled
Before me like a scroll and read thereon
Chaos and Doom, where helpless planets whirl
Dizzily round and round and round,
Like tops across a table, gathering speed
With every spin, to waver on the edge
One instant—looking over—and the next
To shudder and lurch forward out of sight.

One grows dizzy. One can fall and lose oneself in either of two worlds: the world of time and reality and commonplaceness and chitchat or the world of eternity and nothing and oblivion. Each of these is tempting. Each is incomplete without the other. Only *Millayhood* on the outside edge holds them apart and makes them meaningful as they meet in her.

One grows dizzy. Yet one must keep one's head and play the game. Breathlessly on the edge one watches these flashes of insight, sparks caught from the rock of ages. That comes to be the

game. And to play it one must not for an instant shudder and so over-balance.

Since one's own impact against nothing produces these flashes, since one does not belong in nothing, on the outside edge one becomes unusually retentive of identity, reaching up for skies, lying in expansive weedy meadows, listening to the tide rolling like hysteria to make one forget oneself. Objectifying one's experiences somewhat, one also becomes even unusually tender toward the individuality of anything else menaced, a weed or a child. In *The Lamp and the Bell* (I, iii), arguing that Bianca and Beatrice be allowed to be childlike while they are actually still children, Lorenzo is Miss Millay pleading to be what she is. "The child of all mothers" develops a kind of motherliness:

The answers quick and clean, the honest look, the laughter, the love,—
They are gone. They are gone to feed the roses. Elegant and curled
Is the blossom. Fragrant is the blossom. I know. But I do not approve.
More precious was the light in your eyes than all the roses of the world.

This holding on to identity and, objectified, this delight in preserving realities, this reaching out for everything, keeps one from jumping off. Yet unreality, nothing, is as alluring on the outside edge as everything. And the effect of finity poisoning itself over infinity is the effect of looking down from dizzy heights. It is a tightrope dancer's nightmare. Nothing, infinity seems to close in. You yourself want to jump off into the void, hurl yourself from imperial height, swirl down Niagara. "The child of all mothers, native of the earth" finds

no warmth for me at any fire
Today, when the world's fire has burned so low;
I kneel, spending my breath in vain desire,
At that cold hearth which one time roared so strong,
And straighten back in weariness, and long
To gather up my little gods and go.

Infinity or finity is empty without the other, but one holds the other off, making identities.

The soul can split the sky in two,
And let the face of God shine through.
But East and West will pinch the heart
That can not keep them pushed apart;
And he whose soul is flat—the sky
Will cave in on him by and by.

Personality comes to be a compound of infinity and finity, eternity

and time, knowing themselves by conflict, drawing each other close, trying to relieve each other by union. It is an ultimate witticism, a paradox, the occult connection between nothing and everything, a mad compound of the mortal and the immortal.

The precocious child cheats both nothing and everything as they conspire against her. She takes her blue-flag flower to heaven with her after the earth has burned to cinders with her death. She yearns towards Oblivion, toward Silence, a tenth Muse. But as Masters says, Beauty is Death but not Oblivion. And she leaves her songs behind her to be read. She yearns towards weedy meadows:

Life is a quest and love a quarrel—
Here is a place for me to lie.

She longs for burial in the unplumbed ocean, longs for the sea in "Burial," "Inland," or "Exiled." And the sea and meadows are expressions of infinity.

My heart is warm with the friends I make,
And better friends I'll not be knowing;
Yet there isn't a train I wouldn't take,
No matter where it's going.

And yet she still keeps her head on the outside edge, for that is the game and part of identity and she is drawn just as powerfully toward the concrete and finite as toward the abstract and infinite. Even in a "Lament,"

Life must go on;
I forget just why.

She succumbs to life, in short, cheating death too.

Life, were thy pains as are the pains of hell,
So hardly to be born, yet to be born,
And all thy boughs more grim with wasp and thorn
Than armored bough stood ever, too chill to spell
With the warm tongue, and sharp with broken shell
Thy ways, whereby in wincing haste forlorn
The desperate foot must travel, blind and torn,
Yet must I cry,—so be it; it is well.

Miss Millay knows full well that

Life has no friend; her converts late or soon
Slide back to feed the dragon with the moon.

Neither upstairs nor down, she cheats both life and death, taking both unto herself. And so, on the one hand,

It is apparent that there is no death.
But what does that signify?
Not only underground are the brains of men
Eaten by maggots.
Life in itself is nothing,
An empty cup, a flight of uncarpeted stairs.
It is not enough that yearly, down the hill,
April
Comes like an idiot, babbling and strewing flowers.

And so, on the other hand,

This is my testament, that we are taken;
Our colours are as clouds before the wind;
Yet for a moment stood the foe forsaken,
Eyeing Love's favor to our helmet pinned;
Death is our master,—but his seat is shaken;
He rides victorious,—but his ranks are thinned.

And therefore

So fair to me life's vineyards, nor less fair
Than the sweet heaven my fathers hoped to gain;
So bright this earthly blossom spiked with care,
This harvest hung behind the boughs of pain,
Needs must I gather, guessing by the stain
I bleed, but know not wherefore, know not where.

The precocious child, starting out in two worlds, both of which repudiated her because of her uncommonness, socializes between both herself to the point of paradox and prepares to enjoy herself and beauty, a hedonist.

Meanwhile, life, being, has become a mixture of everything and nothing, one hungering for the other entire, neither satisfied without the other. Miss Millay's identity is a finite emptiness in the midst of an infinite emptiness, a satiety of time in the midst of a satiety of timelessness. The emptinesses draw to each other, and the satieties repel each other. Coming together, the finite and the infinite know each other and establish an identity, the knower, outside edgeness; and egoism vanishes in a kind of cosmic selflessness not unassociable with Nirvanan experiences. This identity is Miss Millay, child, woman, poet, and mystic, single-named in a common precocity on the outside edge, finite and infinite, timely and timeless, mortal and immortal, perpetually young without ever having had a childhood, a mad conceit. The preser-

vation of this identity depends upon never quite coming down to earth, never quite letting life get the better of death, never letting the infinite or the finite get the better of the other, never letting the magic mad circle of identity from child to mystic break.

VIII.

Miss Millay is therefore naturally a hedonist. For hedonism is a will to enjoy oneself and to enjoy beauty. And ultimately Miss Millay is not only the first and last beauty but also, core of the cosmic apple, even the first and last entity, the final reality or ideality.

Though the author of "Dirge without Music" and other similar poems knows Omar well, her enjoyments are not Khayamish. Metaphysical she may be, but she is nowise reasonably philosophic in her enjoyment of herself or other beauty. To be philosophic would make her less mystical and less womanly and so destroy the magic circle of identity which keeps the East and West from collapsing together, pinching hearts and crushing unities between. Wistful she may be too, as a child, and self-centered may be her world. But it and she are ideally not selfish. The King's Henchwoman agrees with the King's Henchman:

Ah, Life, I hate thee for thy stingy ways!
Thou art a chapman and a chafferer;
And cheapenest with they meeching whine
Thy loveliest wares!
Thy bony brother Death
Hath to his name but a puff of smoke in a potshard;
But what he hath, he gives.

To slap Life's face thus is to be free and uninhibited, independent of life and death, for the enjoyment of beauty, and oneself.

The first beauty is Miss Millay herself, a mad occult connection between unlike things. But naturally one does not speak of enjoying oneself as enjoying beauty; one speaks, rather, of enjoying beauty. And Beauty is all those formal identities wrested like *Millayhood* forever from nothing, those formal identities barely perceived by uninhibited spirits with Euclidian visions. Beauty is *Millayhood*, is Miss Millay's poetry, the essence of which is herself, is also life and death and love, not lovers, between them. It is Death, but not Oblivion. And like its votaries, Beauty,

Beauty beyond all feathers that have flown
Is free; you shall not hood her to your wrist,
Nor sting her eyes, nor have her for your own
In any fashion

That is to say, Beauty has not only its own time and place sacred against violation by the bluebeards but also its own lasting and evanescent qualities, its mortality and immortality, its time in Greece and its timelessness on a Grecian Urn, its ultimate finality as Truth or identity.

Beauty, then, is a madness, like *Millayhood*, a compound of nothing and everything, neither one nor the other, never coming down to earth, never quite leaving it. It, too, is finally outside edgeness, a lunacy. It is a joy forever; its loveliness increases; it binds one to the earth, a thing of dreams never quite of the earth; and it never passes into utter nothingness. Infinity is surfeit. No wine is so wonderful as thirst. Finiteness is incompleteness. It is want. One complements or relieves the other. One intoxicates the other in an occult connection. And this ecstasy is identity, the first and last beauty, the enjoyment of which is the purpose of living.

Oh, sleep forever in the Latmian cave,
Mortal Endymion, darling of the moon! . . .
Whom earthen you, by deathless lip adored,
Wild-eyed and stammering to the grasses thrust,
And deep into her crystal body poured
The hot and sorrowful sweetness of the dust:
Whereof she wanders mad, being all unfit
For mortal love, that might not die of it.

Precocious child, pure poet, woman, and mystic, Miss Millay is finity dizzied by infinity, the Moon mad from its contact with Endymion and its mortal consciousness of its own immortal identity, a conceit, a witticism. Her hedonism is the enjoyment of beauty, and beauty is truth, the only reality or ideality, identity, the finite made infinite, a conceit, a witticism, a paradox.

IX

Americans owe a volume of pure poetry to the triplet childlessness of Edna St. Vincent Millay because she herself owes her identity to that precocious childlessness. To try to know Edna St. Vincent Millay is to reach for the moon, a paradox, seeming

at night with its reflected light to make shadows move but actually only throwing into relief what is already moving: the woman who makes most of her own identity in its three or four phases is at last least personal in it, and the readers who see in Miss Millay's verse only the frustrated hopes and fears of her own generation of women are looney as the people who think the moon makes shadows move. If Miss Millay ever comes down to earth and her own generation, she will break the magic circle of identity which preserves horizons and unities between them. She will grow old, grow occasional, lose her precocity, lose herself between East and West. To know Miss Millay as she is in her poems is to be a bit mad. It is to be in love. It is never to come down to earth and yet never to jump off it either, but to be tempted to do both even to the point of taking off one's coat and folding it neatly on the Bank as though one would never need it again. It is to be precociously witty.

At last Miss Millay is the lightning severing two worlds and illuminating both, an occult connection between them. The outside edge is midway between two unlike universes, a chaos of nothing and a chaos of everything, on which identity is form or beauty. And here, though self-centering, beauty or truth or identity is ego-radiant, a viewpoint ultimately as disinterested as a philosopher's and as remote from the commonplace as an idea. It looks into both universes, deriving something from both. It is the viewpoint of the precocious child, neither young nor old; of the woman, neither selfless nor selfish, neither withholding nor giving herself; of the poet, neither occasional, timely or local, nor yet remote from realities, the language of poetry; of the mystical wit who detects occult resemblances between this and that until all is reduced to unity or *Millayhood*; and of the hedonist, finally, who enjoys life because she enjoys death. This identity is the first and last witticism, the Beauty which is Truth and all ye need to know.

As a duck's back sheds water, personality sheds all experience which is not shared in by all the unlike components of that personality. Miss Millay is not concerned with the woman who resents the child or the child which resents the woman but only with old age or commonplaceness which threatens both. Such ex-

periences, and war and death and life, which menace the existence of child-woman-poet-mystic only matter, and in the process of being resisted in herself or in men, they are sifted through, aged in, that personality which is *Millayhood* until they acquire the flavor of that paradox. This personality does not smash Life or Death but somehow gets big with them and brings them forth twins, barely beautiful, to be mothered and slapped and brought up right. Life or Death would slap back at a man—he couldn't get away with a *Millaypropos*.

Now the connections established by wits seldom embrace all of two or more unlike objects. Coming down to earth, Miss Millay can be a child, a woman, a poet, or a mystic merely, and at breakfast she is probably one or the other of these. But then she is not herself, the wit who has made connections and is at the same time partly all four, at her best.

Being precocious, in short, is no cue to play only the spoiled child any more than being a pure poet is a cue for being merely artificial. Sometimes personality splits. When Miss Millay goes before a microphone, for example, sometimes she forgets that she is something more than a child, and pouts. Of course Christopher Robin sometimes has to come downstairs to eat or go upstairs to sleep. These duties have really nothing to do with the midway child, and finally the radio-performer has nothing to do with, is less than, the writer.

But in some poems in Part IV of *Wine from these Grapes*, like "On Thought in Harness", doubting herself, commiserating herself, Miss Millay is less than herself, a stellar writer—she has come downstairs and turned up her nose at the spinach,—it's not yet time for her to unleash that falcon, caught in the midworld, from her wrist. In the seasonal poems (chiefly Part I) she only dallies, looking for sermons in stones. But she knows here she is only a "ten o'clock scholar", and it hardly matters. It does not matter that as a whole *Wine from these Grapes* is not so light-hearted as Miss Millay's earlier books. Even when one is neither old nor young one has to be older or younger. But it does matter that Miss Millay is still at her best when she is cuffing Life ("Apostrophe to Man", "Epitaph for the Race of Man", etc.) or slapping Death ("Lines for a Grave-stone", "Conscientious Ob-

jector", etc.) And in spite of the sermonic overtones, her theme-song is still

Beauty, that made no promise,
And has no word to break; . . .
Catch from the board of Beauty
Such careless crumbs as fall.
Here's hope for priest and layman;
Here's heresy for all.

It's not yet as though Miss Millay were unwomaned and let either Life or Death have the last word!

by L. Robert Lind

AD FEMINAM TRISTEM, SED. POETAM

(AFTER READING EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY'S "FATAL INTERVIEW")

O come away at last from this lorn love
That will not hear, however sad you speak;
O brood no more for him, you hurt wild dove,
Seeking the lost that comes not though you seek.
Were man so to be longed for and in truth
The inmost object of your grave desire,
And more than merely puppet in the booth
Of sonnet-music, moved by a singing wire,

You could not so your sorrow still rehearse
And ring the changes in one mournful measure,
Exhaust the resolutions of your verse,
Or find in repetition such wry pleasure:
You could but, woman-like, grieve without a word;
Yet, being poet, your mourning must be heard.

by Donald MacCampbell

MR. ROGERS ADRIFT ON THE S. OF C.

DUSK AT THE GROVE. By Samuel Rogers. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1934.

For reasons which should (but apparently do not) seem obvious to contemporary critics, the introspective technique has so far made but little progress in the field of fiction. It has now been several years since James Joyce, following the lubricious footsteps of Dr. Freud, entered the stream-of-consciousness to produce a book which promised to revolutionize the modern novel. But apart from *Ulysses* and a handful of lesser imitations nothing very sensational in the way of reform has been effected. The introspective novel, despite the efforts of Joyce, Proust, and the indefatigable Mrs. Woolf, remains a promissory note that has never been met.

The technical difficulties which inevitably arise to produce its failure are clearly illustrated in a new book by Samuel Rogers, *Dusk at the Grove*, which was awarded the Atlantic Prize of ten thousand dollars. Notwithstanding its obvious shortcomings, *Dusk at the Grove* is a surprisingly good novel, and Mr. Rogers may be said to have carried the introspective technique well nigh as far as a writer of ordinary talent can ever hope to carry it. Unfortunately, however, a careful examination of the work will show that this is by no means far enough.

The narrative opens on a train in the early summer of 1909. The Waring family, which includes the parents (Luly and Mark) and the three children (Linda, Brad, and Dicky), is returning for a vacation at the Grove: their attractive summer residence on the Rhode Island coast. With them is young Thornton Ellis, one of the children's play-mates. These people are first introduced to the reader through long passages of introspection which are not only, in this case needlessly vapid, but—and here is a serious objection to the method—reveal all too clearly the muted voice of the author himself. Six people, four of whom are children, are

riding in a Pullman car. Yet, because Mr. Rogers has made no attempt to disguise either the color or the cadenced flow of his normal narrative style, the intrinsic flavor of their thoughts is consistently the same. Consequently the book, throughout the entire first section, is tedious and unreal.

To lend reality to the stream-of-consciousness, the novelist must needs suppress his own natural literary style: this is the rub. For apart from the effect of such a suppression upon the artistic value of the production, the question still arises as to what extent the stream-of-consciousness is itself psychologically real. Actually, people think not only in terms of verbal tropes but also in terms of pictorial images; so that even where the novelist, by suppressing his natural style, has mastered the stream of consciousness technique, he is by no means certain of having produced a faithful record of mental processes. In short, psychology—as Henry James once showed—may frequently flirt with literature, but only with the understanding that an ultimate marriage must needs be carefully avoided.

The second part of Mr. Rogers' book opens at the Grove just ten years later. Linda is now a sensitive and beautiful girl of twenty-one, engaged to Thornton but loved by Joel who is a frequent visitor at the summer home. Brad (who, with Thornton, never does become real) is wrestling with the problem of a career. Dicky is returning from the War with a penchant for strong liquors. And Linda is wondering whether or not she cares as much for Thornton as she did before he left for the front. This is about all that happens in this section, but the characters are at last beginning to gain some semblance of individuality.

As the book progresses, other difficulties arise. Mr. Rogers forgets to balance the physical with the mental behavior of his characters, and when one person is allowed to go on with his thoughts for several paragraphs without so much as re-crossing his legs or taking a look at the dahlias on the table the effect is about as real as if one were listening to a gramophone blaring forth from a bag of excelsior. Nor is the status of reality in any way changed where one character is permitted to reflect for twenty or thirty lines before deciding to answer a question posed by another character on the preceding page! But they are of the introspective technique itself.

The third section of *Dusk at the Grove* opens in December, 1928. Linda has invited Dicky to join her at the Grove for their first winter visit there since childhood. She is now married to Thornton, grown rich but dull, and Dicky is unhappily wedded to Ellen—a morbid and neurotic girl who was his childhood sweetheart. Linda has arranged the meeting in order to give her brother a respite from domestic cares, and Dicky, hoping to enliven the occasion, has asked Joel to join them. Now for the first time Linda realizes just what Joel really means to her and how much finer and more genuine he is than Thornton. The gradual discovery of her love, which follows, is easily the strongest part of the whole book, but it could have been improved still further had Mr. Rogers produced a clearer picture of the outward scene—it all takes place around the fireplace in the evening—and left some few details of the mental drama to the reader's imagination. Here, incidentally, is still another shortcoming of the technique; in attempting to be psychologically accurate, the novelist is tempted to record thought processes which, from a purely artistic standpoint, had best be left unrecorded. Imagination, even in this day of fact-worship, is still an integral part of artistic creation. Subtlety and insinuation, too, are ingredients which make the fare more relishable.

What little important action the book contains is concentrated in the two remaining sections. Luly, for long an invalid, dies. Dicky is driven to suicide as the result of Ellen's shameless and unbalanced behavior. Linda is separated from the man she loves by an indifferent husband and an adorable child. While Mark, a frustrated clergyman, is left in the end with the sad responsibility of selling the Grove.

There is material here for a really fine novel—a novel such as the great Russian master, Tourgenieff, might have written with charm and persuasiveness. The book has the same autumnal atmosphere, but none of the dreamy realism, which one finds in *On the Eve* or *A House of Gentlefolk*. Mr. Rogers, unlike Tourgenieff, has chained himself to a difficult and, as this review has tried to suggest, an almost unworkable technique. As a result he has lost an opportunity to write the kind of book which his finely cadenced style and excellent knowledge of New England life would seem to warrant.

by Maurice Halperin

SIBERIAN EPIC

OUT OF CHAOS, by Ilya Ehrenbourg. (Translated from the Russian by Alex. Bashky). New York: Holt and Company, 1934. \$2.50.

There are several reasons why this novel is one of the best books that have been written about Soviet Russia. In the first place, it not only shows high technical skill and thorough documentation, but it very effectively provides the reader with an *emotional* understanding of Soviet realities which is far more satisfactory than the mere *theoretical* knowledge dispensed by historians and journalists. In the second place, the author's temperament and intellect are peculiarly adapted to the task of interpreting the Revolution to the adult Western mind. Ehrenbourg is what the Communists call a "fellow traveller", that is, one who sympathizes with the new order but who, for some reason or other, cannot actively coöperate in the struggle to build Socialism. In the case of Ehrenbourg, who lived in Paris as an exile and returned to Russia only after the Revolution, his habits of thought and feeling were so firmly established that he could not submit to the rigid discipline which the successful culmination of any plan of action requires. He returned to France in 1921, convinced that the future lay with Bolshevism and conscious of the fact that he himself belonged to the old world, that he was a "bad builder", as he put it, yet hoping that his books "could help destroy the society" from which he could not escape. Thus he still lives in Paris, occasionally going back to the Soviet Union, but only as a visitor, as a representative of a dying civilization.

On one of these visits, he went to Siberia to watch the Five Year Plan in action and came back with material for *Out of Chaos*. With telling realism it describes the building of a "Giant", an enormous steel mill, at Kuznetsk in the heart of the Siberian wilderness. Here are gathered thousands of human beings, fighting intense cold, bedbugs, lice, privation, disease and the dead weight of the past. Here we see the tremendous driving force of

the Revolution, its impersonality and its inevitable success. Here, in the midst of terror and squalor we witness unbelievable courage, heroism, and devotion to a cause. Here, too, the impact of Revolution brings despair and tragedy to the individual who cannot adjust himself. With his understanding of the old world and the new, Ehrenbourg portrays the human drama of Socialist construction as perhaps no other writer has done, vividly unfolding the sources of psychological and emotional conflict in scores of characters drawn from groups with various social and intellectual backgrounds. Of most of these people we catch only a glimpse—uncouth peasants attracted to Siberia by boots and sugar, Party members whose only passion is work, shabby adventurers, petty thieves and unreformed traders, in forced or voluntary exile, seeking loot or social regeneration, idealistic students and engineers, primitive Asiatics jolted out of their stone-age culture, stranded intellectuals, foreign experts working for dollars, etc.—yet in each brief portraiture the origins and the essential character of a certain type of individual are revealed. In every case, the reactions to the new environment are clearly and plausibly defined.

Almost any one of a dozen swift sketches contains the seed of an entire novel, but Ehrenbourg chose to build his story around the experiences of two young men and a girl. While each character emerges from the creative process a living reality, each is in turn a symbol, and in the rivalry between Kolka and Volodia for the love of Irina is represented, on a higher plane, the struggle between the new and the old. To Kolka, who comes from the masses, the Revolution means freedom and light. Unhampered by the cultural traditions of the past, the building of the "Giant" calls forth from within him the noblest of human qualities; in the common task he finds life. Irina knows the intellectual refinements of the old order, but in the onslaught of a crude, vital present against a moribund past, her womanly instincts lead her to recognize and finally to accept the life-giving forces of the new society. Volodia, the tragic protagonist, is Ehrenbourg himself. His is a complex nature, reacting with deep sensitivity to the harsh, primitive environment of Socialist construction. In the still youthful body of Volodia is the mind of a mature Western intellectual with its uncompromising individuality, its devastating

critical acumen, its hankering after spiritual values and its inevitable sense of loneliness—for it is doomed to solitude in both worlds, in the old, decayed and decrepit, hopelessly rotting away, and in the new, crude and raw, building up from the very bottom. Oppressed by a need for love, beauty and the cultivation of the intellect, he shrinks from his fellow-men whose sole passion is the construction of a steel mill. "What seems to be so exasperating," he remarks in a moment of bitterness, "is not that the Revolution is so cruel, but that it is utterly without sense . . . A man has no time for love to-day. He smelts pigiron, and from time to time he copulates . . . How majestic—and how idiotic." In the defeatism of Volodia, Irina recognizes certain death, and finally goes to Kolko. Irina's choice, the Successful Completion of the "Giant" and the suicide of Volodia, all proclaim the triumph of the new order.

There is something about the spiritual defeat of Volodia, culminating in his self-destruction, that reminds one of the inexorable Fate of Greek tragedy. Toward the end, Volodia comes to the full realization that the values he holds most dear can come to life again and flourish only in the new society whose birth pains he has witnessed, but which he cannot survive. Late in the story there is a truly dramatic climax in which Volodia, speaking before a gathering of students, is suddenly moved to discard his prepared speech in order to relieve his conscience of its long confined debt to the Revolution. He had intended once and for all to bring about that inevitable reckoning of accounts between himself and the "builders", to make a speech that would "stagger his hearers like a shot of shrapnel". In his notes he had written:—

You have eliminated from life the heretics, the dreamers, the philosophers, the poets. You have established universal literacy and equally universal ignorance . . . You may build a thousand furnaces and you will still be ignorant. The antheap is a model of reason and logic. But it existed a thousand years ago, too. Nothing has changed in it. There are ant-workers, ant-specialists, and ant-chiefs. But there never was an ant-genius . . . They build, they carry twigs, they lay eggs, they devour one another, and they are happy. They are far more honest than you are—they do not prattle of culture.

But at the moment when he steps onto the platform he feels that there is something more important to say. That day he had spoken to a vulgar French journalist who wanted to know how many times a month the Russians ate meat, and who told him that Paul Valéry was a dreadful bore, "worse than Proust". Looking into the audience, he thinks he sees the smug countenance of the Frenchman in the back of the hall. He begins to speak:—

To-day I had a talk with a Frenchman. He is a journalist. He told me that in France the students don't read poetry. They want to amuse themselves and study only to get diplomas . . . I'll tell you frankly; you know very little. But already you know a great deal more than those French students. I am not comparing the programs. I am speaking of the attitude towards knowledge . . . The important thing for them is to take a place in life already made, whereas you want to create this life. Can there be any doubt with which of the two lies the future? . . . Culture is not a dividend—it cannot be secured in a safe. It is created every moment, by every word, every thought, every action. I have heard you talk about poetry. That was the birth of culture, its growth, painful and difficult. Look what's over there. I saw it to-day. Museums and a few odd solitary men. That is death. And life? Life is here—

Volodia, however, is conscious of his own fate. He quotes Paul Valéry: "To act one must be ignorant of many things." Once he believed this. "I thought that you were able to build plants because you did not know Dante", he tells the students. "I think, though, that Valéry is wrong. He lives without air. It is possible both to know and to act. There is a kind of knowledge that condemns us to inaction—I know it well: it is dead knowledge." Like Valéry, he, too, is condemned to inaction, but in a society where inaction is necessarily treason, his doom is sealed. The inevitability of his death casts a long shadow of tragedy over the faith, heroism and epic grandeur of the Five Year Plan.

The character of Volodia, into which Ehrenbourg seems to have projected his own temperament and personality, is perhaps the outstanding achievement of the novel. The complexity and depth of his emotional and intellectual reactions are communicated to the reader with an intense, moving realism. Yet Volodia is not only an individual; he is, as we have said before, a symbol through

whom Ehrenbourg makes *the* fundamental critique of the Soviets and through whom, in turn, he answers that critique. Surging about Volodia and the two other major figures of the novel is a mass of humaity into whose collective and individual desires and motives we penetrate, now briefly, now at greater length, but with a feeling that what we see and hear is genuine (skillfully the author works in parts of students' letters which he brought back from Siberia and published separately in the *Nouvelle Revue Française*). And in the background, but close enough to touch and smell are the virgin forests and swamps, the dense Siberian taiga over which the glowing "Giant" towers, dominating man and nature, and leading the way "out of chaos".

by Austin Warren

THE NEW ENGLAND WAY

ORTHODOXY IN MASSACHUSETTS. By Perry Miller. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1933. 353 pp. \$3.50.

Mr. Miller has written a memorably able book. It is at once a history of the Massachusetts Bay Colony during its first two decades and, further, an interpretation of the dominating ideas and critical issues of Puritanism. Based on full and careful research, it transcends compilation: Miller has wrestled with his texts till they have yielded a coherent meaning; and he evinces genuine acumen as an exegete and genuine skill as an expositor. He has seen his subject in the large as well as microscopically. New England Puritanism must be viewed against the background of its origins;—in the first four chapters of his properly subtitled "genetic study" (and not till after these do we set foot on American soil), we are enabled to do this. Nor does he forthwith forget this background, for in the last chapter he contrasts forcefully the

policy of Colonial Puritanism, still adhering to the ideas current at home when the emigrants set out, and the new liberalism to which their British co-believers had become committed.

New England historians have constantly distinguished the Separatists of Plymouth from the Puritans (i.e., Low Church Anglicans) of Massachusetts Bay. Yet many a reader must have noticed, with bewilderment, that the church at Salem was founded in 1629 in a strictly Congregational fashion and that the succeeding ecclesiastical societies followed suit; that while the English Puritans desired to substitute the Presbyterian for the Episcopal system, the founding fathers of New England rejected the "classis" and bitterly attacked the few Presbyterian sympathizers among their early clergy. Properly rejecting the proffered explanation that the influence of the colony at Plymouth converted Cotton and Winthrop and their fellows to Congregationalism, Miller fully and clearly and with evidence so copious as not to allow of refutation states the answer, which is, in brief, that the Puritans who emigrated to New England were adherents to Dr. William Ames' "Non-Separatist Congregationalism."

This is Miller's chief thesis; but it does not constitute his only service. Two other themes he treats with learning and clarity are the Puritan attitude toward tolerance and the Puritan conception of the Church and state relationship. He shows that the British Puritans of 1620-33, in their belief that a firm State could suffer no rival sects, differed no whit from the Laudians or the "Papists," and that, when in Civil War and Commonwealth days the exigencies of state made necessary the toleration of all varieties of Protestantism, New Englanders, not abreast of these developments, remained loyal to the doctrine which prevailed when, with the purpose of establishing a Holy State, they set out for the American wilderness. The real work of experiment and innovation for the New England leaders lay in the sphere of politics, not ecclesiastical theory; and Miller tells the ironical story—how those who on British soil had been the minimizers of established authority grew, when in responsible power, the defenders of a clerical and magisterial oligarchy.

An excellent bibliography, both of primary sources and of commentaries, concludes this model of scholarly book-making.

by George Milton Janes

MEMOIRS AND ESSAYS OF A PROFESSOR

MEMOIRS AND LETTERS OF OSCAR W. FIRKINS. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press. 286 pp. \$2.50.

SELECTED ESSAYS. By Oscar W. Firkins. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press. 298 pp. \$2.50.

For many years Oscar W. Firkins was connected with the University of Minnesota both as a student and as a teacher of English and comparative literature, and now the University Press honors the literary work and the teaching services of an inspiring teacher in the publication of these two volumes of *Memoirs and Letters* and *Selected Essays*.

Professor Firkins was of mixed descent, Anglo-Saxon, French, and Dutch. He was born in Minnesota, educated at the state university and through the encouragement of one of his teachers who discerned his capabilities, specialized in English, and after taking his degree remained as a teacher all his life, except that in 1919 he went to New York and for two years was dramatic critic on the *Weekly Review*. Handicapped from childhood by highly defective vision he had made himself nevertheless master of several languages even before entering college. On account of this defect perhaps he was one of the most absent-minded of men and would appear in class without a tie. His main interests seemed to have been the theatre and his teaching. He was interested in human beings but preferred solitude to company. Human oddities interested him greatly and he delighted in portraying them in a humorous way. To his students he gave much of time and attention and while not one of the most popular professors on the faculty he gathered about him in his classes from year to year a respectable number of students genuinely interested in the subjects he taught. The seekers for easy courses avoided his classes and this selective process together with his skill as a teacher gave him a firm academic standing. He was especially interested in his students and was quick to discern their real qualities, although he

could censure shortcomings when necessary and go to the root of the matter in his criticisms. He never wrote letters of recommendation for students whose work had not won his complete respect. He was gentle but also inflexible. The published letters are especially interesting and reveal the many aspects of his character. Richard Burton in his memoir declares that one characteristic of Professor Firkins was his capacity for growth which continued to the last of his life. Netta W. Wilson at the close of her biographical sketch has the following summary:

"I think that most of those who knew him as teacher and writer would agree that he was the most unusual teacher they met at the university. He may, as he himself declared, have lacked the profound scholarship that is deified by the academic mind. He may have loved the sparkle of a fine phrase more than he could love the sober fact behind it. He may have had all the faults of his undeniable virtues. But his virtues remain, embodied in his writings and in the inspiration of his teaching. It is by these things, I think, he would wish to be judged."

Selected Essays is in many ways a remarkable book and the essays cover many topics. It may be said without fear of contradiction that they possess style and charm. One of the essays, that "on the Character of Macbeth" appeared first in this magazine, and so Professor Firkins may be regarded as an old friend. The opening essay is on "Man: A Character Sketch", which Christopher Morley has described as a "brilliant essay in spiritual anthropology." Two of the essays are on Emerson and Howells and of both of these men Firkins spoke with authority. Other essays will appeal to various readers according to their varying tastes. Firkins seems to have been a middle of the road man and states his case in the form of thesis and antithesis, but beyond all he was a Humanist in the old fashioned sense of that term. Although on account of a peculiar temperament and continued ill health his life was not an entirely happy one, it was in the true sense a successful and useful one. One lays down the two volumes with the feeling that Professor Firkins was a thinker and teacher well worth knowing.

by George Atherton Chaffee

FOUR NOVELS FROM THE SOUTH

SO RED THE ROSE. By Stark Young. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934. 431 pages.

STARS FELL IN ALABAMA. By Carl Carmer. New York: Farrar and Rhinehart, Inc., 1934. 294 pages.

LAMB IN HIS BOSOM. By Caroline Miller. Harper and Brothers, publishers, New York and London, 1933. 345 pages.

THIS GREEN THICKET WORLD. By Howell Vines. Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1934. 376 pages.

Is there a Southern problem? Do the books by recent Southern writers admit such a problem; if they do, how and how well do they solve it?

These questions spring to the mind of the reviewer reading such new volumes as *So Red the Rose*, *Lamb in His Bosom*, *This Green Thicket World*, and *Stars Fell in Alabama*. Of course "Southern problem" is a very abstract term and means little. However, by that let us understand a sectional consciousness of superiority over, and of maltreatment by, the North. That there has been such a problem since long before the Civil War cannot be denied. It has existed ever since 1800 and, from time to time, comes to the fore in our day. And its most natural outlet is in fiction. *So Red the Rose* presents the problem during the Civil War, and *Stars Fell in Alabama* shows the effects of it at the present time. The other two books mentioned above avoid it for the most part.

In *So Red the Rose* we see the Old South with its cultured planters, its idyllic love affairs, its well-treated slaves. We see its romance shattered by the tramp, tramp, tramp of Yankee soldiers led by a drunken Grant; its young gentlemen sent home from far battlefields dead or broken in spirit; its wealth gone and much of its charm departed with the influx of carpet-baggers and Northern Provosts. So well is its case presented that Northerners forget their background and burn with the injustice, the damnable treatment given these Mississippi planters. We leave the book realizing

that the Old South has sung its Swan Song and has died a somewhat violent death. The young Northerner who wants to build efficient factories and import machinery is seen at the end of the volume trying to convince the old planter who will not be convinced. And we know it will be the end. The book is obviously a tract in fiction of the Nashville "Neo-Confederates".

Stars Fell in Alabama is a pot-pourri of the life and traditions of Alabama by a Yankee who lived there for several years while he taught in the University at Tuscaloosa. His main idea seems to be that the State is bewitched, that "stars fell on it", and so it is different from all the rest of the world. We see the Ku Klux Klan terrorizing the negroes and upholding the morals of Southern womanhood. And a lynching is told with graphic force. The mountaineers with their stills for making "corn" and the poor whites and negroes with their fanatical religions seem almost unreal to Non-Southerners. And there are the old plantations and their gracious owners, an echo of the South before the "War Between the States". A kindly distrust of "Damn Yankees" pervades the whole. But underneath everything else in the book we see Carl Carmer's Yankee feeling that the State is provincial, that the status of the negro is unbearable, that the Klan and lynchings are barbaric. Beneath the quaintness, there are glimpses of the tawdry. Life is not all idyllic. And sectionalism increases.

This Green Thicket World is a curious novel, reminiscent of Thomas Hardy's Wessex. It tells of an enchanted land far apart from our world. It is almost biblical in its simplicity, in its departure from life as we know it. While it is nominally laid in Alabama, the locale might as well be Brazil or Kansas, so far as the tale is concerned. There is no faintest glimmer of a Southern problem; the story is simple and takes place in an isolated colony of the patriarchal type, dependent upon and revolving about Uncle Lat Lisper and his statements and whims. And one feels that the story holds the same relation to the book as does the story of Marius, the Epicurean, to Pater's brilliant writing. The air of unreality in *This Green Thicket World* and the novel's slow movement account for its failure to appeal, despite some excellent prose, excellent because of its smooth-flowing quality.

Nor is there much of a Southern problem in *Lamb in his Bosom*,

the Pulitzer Prize Novel of 1933. This story takes place in the piney woods part of Georgia and tells of the experiences of a pioneer and his family there from 1820 to 1870. It describes the hardships and the happiness of forcing a living from the wilderness. The family of the Carvers and their neighbors form a separate entity, apart from the rest of Georgia, and independent, save for the yearly trips to the coast for bartering and court. Only a glimpse of the Civil War comes when details of soldiers come to the settlement and force the able-bodied men to the war, killing as deserters those who refuse to go. The Carvers and Lonzo Smith, who married Cean Carver, have no slaves and they see no reason why they should have to fight to help the rich planters keep theirs. But all this reference to the problem covers but several pages. The story itself is the *raison d'être* of the book and it is interesting, if not inspired.

Of these four books, then, only *So Red the Rose* and *Stars Fell in Alabama* make much of the Southern problem, and the former is the only one of the four to be considered "Southern", with a Southern problem as its main thesis. And *So Red the Rose* does nothing to settle that problem; it is merely a very pretty lament, a pastoral swan-song, an extended version of its author's beautiful but short "Not in Memoriam but in Defence".

by C. F. Harrold

FOREVER ENGLAND

LIFE IN ENGLISH LITERATURE. By L. A. G. Strong and Monica Redlich. Boston: Little, Brown & Company. 1934.

The authors of this book must have had a delightful lark. Without attempting to compile an impressive anthology of selections from English literature which would mirror, with any considerable

minuteness, the life of England from Beowulf to A. E. Housman, they have collected enough of the greatest fragments and joined them with sufficient informal commentary to make not only an excellent book for a beginner but a pleasant confection for the jaded palate. In addition, they have inserted fifteen illustrations depicting scenes from English life and literature. The general effect is one of gusto, of delight in journeying briskly through the vast ranges of drama, poetry, romance, and legend, in the company of indefatigable lovers of literature.

The pervading spirit is so ingratiating and good-humored that it inevitably seems churlish to point out the weaknesses and faults of the book as a whole. Yet, in spite of a frankly apologetic Foreword, many readers will wish the authors had approximated a better proportion in contents. The book is perhaps strongest in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries . . . in Dryden, Pepys, Pope, Addison, and Swift. Well done, also, are the chapters covering the Romantic generation. But it is a pity, in view of the excellence of the earlier sections of the book, that so little is made of the nineteenth century, of those writers who are becoming increasingly remote or enigmatic to readers of to-day, of Carlyle, Arnold, and Ruskin. These authors figure as mere names in a final swift conclusion. Of the Victorians, only Dickens, Thackeray, Tennyson, and Browning are represented.

To some extent, the title of the book is misleading. It may suggest to some a title like "English Literature as it has Reflected English Life." But this is evidently not what the authors intended. By "Life" they mean the living principle in literature, or at least that part of literature which bears vitality and lives for posterity. At any rate, to prevent Professor Stoll from rising to object, let us assume that the authors of this book did not mean that all the excerpts here presented are "the true form and pressure" of the ages which produced them, that, for example, their selections from Shakespeare in Chapter X are not to be regarded as illustrations of Elizabethan life realistically mirrored in *Much Ado About Nothing*!

There are reading lists for each chapter, and there is a Bibliography of Texts and Anthologies at the end, which, though select, is not altogether up-to-date.

by Merrill Moore, M. D.

PHOENIX REDIVIVUS

AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION, by Winifred V. Raymond, Ph.D. Farrar and Rinehart, 1934. Price \$2.50. 312 pp.

Those who have been looking for a volume containing information on all phases of sex life will find this book valuable. It is one of the most discerning considerations of a difficult subject that has appeared in many months. In this book, delicacy and dignity are not sacrificed to frankness; nor is accuracy subordinate to social attitudes.

In logical sequence the author has related several well-written chapters on the biology, the psychology, and the history of sex. The origins of modern social institutions are traced from primitive man through centuries of written history up to the present. Their relations to sexual matters is made very clear. Topics which are often voiced in whispers in the living room, the classroom, and at the swimming hole (usually inaccurately) are discussed at length. Sex perversions, prostitution, venereal disease and the normal sex life are handled in an informed manner, and at no time is there a suggestion that these subjects should be morbidly tabooed. The closing note—sex and society—is especially well-sounded, for it presents the outlook and necessity of a personal acceptance of sex problems by the individual before sex aberrations can be eliminated.

At certain points in the text, it seems that undue space is accorded to one or two topics, but possibly the author hopes to emphasize these by mere repetition. Good drawings illustrate the chapter on the biology of sex and are wisely included because of the necessary complexity of this chapter. References are given and correlative reading suggested. The psychiatrist may find it useful for those patients who lack information about the sex factors which bring them to his care. It is a book that can be recommended for the college student and to the general reader.

by John Finch

SPENDER AND AUDEN

POEMS. By Stephen Spender. Random House. New York. 68 pages. 1934.

POEMS. By W. H. Auden. Random House. New York. 218 pages. 1934.

The state of recent English poetry has been embarrassing and pathetic. The magnificent sources and achievements of the tradition in the past have only emphasized the apparent sterility of the present. With perhaps two or three exceptions, the poets of England have been celebrating in monotonous measures old emotions they did not feel and brief passions they could not retain. The soil seemed exhausted. But in the beginning years of this decade, a group of young men have come to deny that charge, to reanimate the tradition. They are of the generation that was too young to go to war. They were the wide-eyed children on the sidewalks, baffled by the marching, observing in silence. They grew up into turmoil and felt the first tremors of the earth beneath them. They asked each other the meaning, no longer trusting the wisdom of the aged, and now they are beginning to give their own answers. Stephen Spender and W. H. Auden—one twenty-five years old, the other twenty-seven, both of Oxford, and both Marxists—are probably the most important members of this group. At any rate, they are the first whose work has reached the American audience.

Spender's poetry is remarkably finished and mature. His mastery of form, his control of rhythm, and his direct, clear-cut imagery allow him more articulate expression than most young poets can manage. This does not mean that his manner is one of ease or excessive restraint. Such a passage as this:

Hopelessly wound round with the cords of street
Men wander down their lines of level graves.
Sometimes the maze knots into flaring caves
Where magic-lantern faces skew for greeting,

is surely no muted understatement. When Spender is writing at his best, the lines are stretched tight upon the hard frame of

his feelings. Then tension makes them hum and vibrate, threatening always to snap. This relentless pressure is a quality of his thinking as well as of his expression. When it is controlled, it makes for a rapid progression from idea to idea in a series of blinding flashes. Then the poem crackles with life. But he sometimes overdoes the pressure, and the movement of his thought becomes either too quick or too violent for the reader to follow. *Beethoven's Death Mask* is an excellent example of the former case, the tension under control. But in *Van der Lubbe* the contact is broken and the force of the poem is lost.

The problem of his poetry is that of the selection of personal values. The most profound influence that the war has exerted upon his generation is an active skepticism toward all standards. If any spiritual concept is to remain, it must do so by passing the most exacting tests that can be applied. The fact that Spender does retain his faith in some of the soul's possessions, in "the palpable and obvious love of man for man", or in "the essential delight of the blood", is an exhilarating discovery. The integrity of this faith is guaranteed by the hard bright words in which it is phrased. The poems are records of the process by which it was reached—a process of experiences brought unmodified into the poet's consciousness and there converted from fragments into unity. This is, in other words, the lyrical process.

W. H. Auden resembles Stephen Spender only in a few superficial respects. Both employ certain stylistic mannerisms—an extreme use of assonance in place of rhyme, for instance;—both are haunted by the memories and mechanics of war; and both have arrived at the same political position. Here the resemblance ceases. Auden's strongest weapon is his merciless humor. With a vigor and gusto that admit no limits, he turns upon every theme his cold, shining irony. In all of his writing, from the shortest lyric to such an ambitious study as *The Dance of Death*, he is most significant as a recorder of destruction. Even the imagery observes this rule. In his poetry night is always more convincing than dawn, winter more real than spring. His methods in this thankless task are simplification and distortion. There are many pitfalls about his way, and he does not always evade them. The influences on his work—Skelton, Hopkins, Eliot, to name a few

—are so obvious that we sometimes suspect they are unassimilated. Sometimes his distortion overleaps itself and becomes either obscure or insipid. Sometimes in his longer pieces, the mood of apoplectic derision which he has created takes possession of the whole and colors with mockery those portions intended to be serious. But no catalogue of faults and virtues will do justice to the final effect of his book. Such things as the demoniac charade, *Pain on Both Sides*, or that brilliant amalgam of prose and verse which he calls *The Orators* are fiery documents, and despite weakness of form and imperfect control, their effect is lethal.

Not the least compliment we can pay Auden is to say that he is always deeply disturbing. His often repeated question, "What are we going to do?" finally takes on a terrifying force. With little effort, he can transform modern society into a madhouse and parade the inmates before us. And here is his true literary significance. Auden may well do for England what E. E. Cummings has done for America. He may help to supply, for contemporary life, the desperate need of a ruthless political and social satire.

The poetic process of W. H. Auden is more evasive, more hard to define than Spender's. It is clear that emotional sympathy plays a large part. Instead of passing experiences through the filter of his mind, Auden lets his consciousness go forth, as it were, and enter into the existences of other people and things. This is neither better nor poorer than Spender's way, but it is essentially different. When Auden speaks of death, it is:

For to be held for friend
By an undeveloped mind
To be joke for children is
Death's happiness.

Death has become a person, one capable of pleasure. Spender writes:

Ambition is my death. That flat thin flame
I feed, that plants my shadow.

Death is now a trait or quality of the poet; he has adopted it. The distinction is important; it is primarily the distinction between dramatic and lyric poetry. As soon as it is recognized,

any comparison of the work of the two men becomes fruitless. There is neither the need nor the possibility of determining which is the better poet. The fact that each is a genuine poet is what mostly matters.

by F. L. Wells

STATE OF MIND

MENTAL DEFECT. By Lionel S. Penrose, M.A., M.D. New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1934. xi 205 pp.

It is ground for some satisfaction that this English work should be made available to American readers, as it approaches the problem with emphasis not the same as those with which we are the more familiar. In this country the emphasis in mental has been largely on its psychometric aspects. In this volume a scant five per cent bears directly on that topic, a treatment of course very inadequate from the viewpoint of the "clinical psychologist." On the other hand the geneticist will find his field more than amply represented, as will the student of the topic in its somatic aspects generally. The earlier portion of the volume is concerned chiefly with methods of investigation, the latter with descriptions of clinical types and to some extent with management; the concept of "subcultural amentia" is a happy one. The outlook on sterilization is skeptical. The discussion of mental diseases, like that of psychometrics, is a little sketchy, and while acclaiming Freud as the greatest psychiatrist (*sic*) of modern times, the author mentions "two classical forms of dementia praecox," (dementia simplex and d. praecocissima) as "fairly frequently seen in persons mentally defective." The book will bring most to the laymen, to the general practitioner, and to the special student who is al-

ready familiar with the psychopathology that it offers but slightly, and who needs a fuller perspective of the somatic component of his subject.

by Edgar L. Pennington

TABLOID HAGIOGRAPHY

THE BOOK OF SAINTS. A biographical dictionary compiled by the Benedictine monks of St. Augustine's, Ramsgate. Third edition. New York: The Macmillan Company; London: A. & C. Black, Ltd. 1934. \$3.00. (21½ cm. pp. xi, 328).

The writing of the lives of saints was the principal literary exercise of the epoch which extended from about the sixth to the eighth century. Then, in the words of Guizot, there sprang up "a literature which has not been remarked, a veritable literature, essentially disinterested, which has scarcely any other end in view but that of procuring intellectual, moral pleasure to the public: I mean the lives of the saints, the legends. They have not been introduced into the literary history of this epoch; they are, however, its true, its only literature, for they are the only works which had the pleasure of the imagination for their object." It was a taste, a general need of the age, that of seeking all the traditions, all the monuments of the martyrs and saints, and transmitting them to posterity. Marcellin, Bishop of Embrun, some thirteen hundred years ago occupied himself in seeking everywhere the palms of the glorious champions of the faith; he went from place to place, and found that almost every town could boast of a patron martyr born within its bosom. Saint Ceran, Bishop of Paris, at the beginning of the seventh century, devoted his life to the same task. He wrote to all the priests, whom he thought learned in

the pious traditions of their country, and urged them to collect the same for him.

In this way there were amassed the materials of the collection commenced in 1613 by Bolland, a Belgium Jesuit, and continued since his death. Nearly seventy huge folio volumes have appeared; but the work is far from complete. So numerous were the saints that there were about two thousand for each month.

The Benedictine Fathers have performed a valuable service in publishing this volume—a volume limited to the most popular saints and to brief biographical notes. It is an important reference work. While it is true that a certain animus is quite manifest at times—especially when dealing with the English Roman Catholics of the time of Henry VIII, and Queen Elizabeth, still the book contains a mine of interesting and useful information.

by Eugene M. Kayden

A BAD DREAM

IT'S UP TO US. By James P. Warburg. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1934. Pp. 207.

It is thoroughly understood nowadays that the New Deal is at once an emergency and a recovery measure, that it is guided by a situational type of thinking, that it consists mainly of expedients to be altered, supplemented, or suspended to meet the demands of the moment, the objective of economic recovery. It is not founded on the belief that parliamentarism is futile, capitalism—dead; it is not guided by an ideology unfamiliar to the native stock of forward-looking and business-minded America; it

is not unfamiliar to the American tradition of square deals, fair rules, and new liberties, evoked periodically to save us from the consequences of high finance, speculation, trusts, holding companies, and monopolies. Understanding and constructive criticism should intuitively perceive that the operating measures of the New Deal would perforce be tentative, adaptable, flexible, varied, possessing none of the rigid constitution of the inflexible ideology of some "new estate". It is therefore unlogical for a critic of the present Administration (I consciously avoid the word "system") to treat us to a recital of the cumulative political and economic horrors of fascism, communism, and national socialism, and to demand to know if we still want an "ism" in free America, that we decide between the planned economy of the totalitarian state and our traditional freedom.

It is a gratuitous assumption, then, to hold that every emergency measure is a deliberate, permanent, fixed policy; it is gratuitous prophecy to declare that the inevitable outcome must be inflation, nationalization of banks, a regimented planned economy, and the loss of our liberties; and, therefore, not at all convincing that "it is up to you and me" to have clear answers to some hundred questions concerning government, agriculture, industry, money, banking, labor, wealth, state budgets, taxation, foreign trade, etc., and "get out and fight" to save our freedom. Incidentally, the author's own concrete proposals that must be applied to agriculture, industry, trade, and banking are limited to a general declaration that we recognize the underlying principles of our economic order based upon freedom to enter into transactions in the hope of reasonable profit—"this freedom to be circumscribed only by such laws as we agree upon with each other, in order to achieve a better balanced structure, and in order to prevent abuse." A capital idea! Then the only thing wanting is the building of rules and institutions, by trial and error, into our economic and social pattern. A general prayer is not an alternative for measures of recovery and for the winning of an economic order founded upon security. A "balanced structure" would not come of itself. And a bad dream of "isms" and inevitabilities is not responsible constructive criticism.

THE CHOICE BEFORE US. By Norman Thomas.. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1934. Pp. 249.

Two problems primarily engage Mr. Thomas: one programmatic in character, to persuade farmers and workers alike to enroll under the socialist standard; the other tactical, embracing the wide range of topics debated in socialist circles for decades. The defeat of socialism in Germany is the occasion for humility and heart-searching. To Mr. Thomas it is evident that socialism does not logically follow the breakdown of capitalism in a country. There is fascism, or nazism, or the New Deal. He admits the socialists of Germany have failed, because they were opportunist, reformist, timid, and blind to the pent-up resentments and frustrations of the peasants and lower middle classes. He considers the New Deal as a form of state capitalism for the revival of private enterprise, but not openly dictatorial and fascist. American socialism must beware of "reformism" and the blind cult of democracy; it must win the support of the farmers and middle classes without whom no authority is decisive.

DEMOCRACY IN CRISIS. By Harold J. Laski. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 1933. Pp. 267.

I grant it: the book is learned, massive, keenly analytical; yet it omits what is unique in our civilization of power-energy and credit-finance. It invokes the ideals of equality and Platonic justice, it condemns us for nurturing "habit without philosophy, power without principle, authority without justice"; yet it offers no hope, no affirmation, no action for living man to-day. The author proves that the inherent contradictions of capitalism must lead to social conflicts, that capitalism will fight than coöperate with the new forces, that representative institutions are decaying, that the constitutional methods are best, that revolutionary means will not bring the new order nearer, that the enemies of labor will disavow democratic principles in the final combat, that a peaceful reorganization under a labor government is desirable but highly improbable. Ah, professor! What is the sum total of all this analysis and learning?

E. M. K.